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ABSTRACT

Presenting sound instructional strategies and writing theories, these proceedings of a conference held at Marymount Manhattan College address the needs of writing teachers at all educational levels. Following an introduction outlining the conference and the "New York Writes" project, the keynote address discusses the renewed interest in taking writing seriously. The 15 conference papers are arranged in four areas, the first group of which stresses the importance of articulation, both vertically from elementary school through college and horizontally through a single institution. The second group examines curricular materials and research in English as a second language instruction, while the third group showcases the writing processes of students at work. The fourth group reflects the theme implicit throughout the proceedings: all language experiences, from the mundane to the most artistic, can be used in writing classes. (HTH)

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Selected Papers from the 1982 Conference "New York Writes"

Jointly sponsored by the CUNY Association of Writing Supervisors and the New York City Association of Teachers of English

May 1983

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Selected Papers from the 1982 Conference "New York Writes: Kindergarten through College"

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PREFACE

Long before "articulation" emerged as the educational buzzword of the eighties, English teachers in New York City were working collectively. Since the 1960's, kindergarten and elementary school teachers, English teachers in junior and senior high schools, and college English and English Education teachers have met regularly to share their perceptions of problems, successes, failures, and dreams through the New York City Association of Teachers of English (NYCATE). At The City University of New York, heads of writing programs in the seventeen undergraduate colleges began meeting in 1973 and formed the CUNY Association of Writing Supervisors (CAWS) to establish a forum for exchanging ideas on improving writing instruction throughout the University.

For more than a decade, countless collaborative efforts, formal and informal, have existed between CUNY English faculty and the schools of New York City, and many of us have worked together on various projects during this time. A new type of collaborative venture was the joint CAWS/NYCATE conference which we sponsored in the spring of 1982. It was the culmination of a year's planning to create a program that would be meaningful to writing teachers of all educational levels--kindergarten through college. Indeed, as we developed the panels, we realized how much we all had in common: how much recent theories of composition and sound instructional strategies transcend the various "levels" of teaching writing to children and adults.

Our conference luncheon speaker, Gene I. Maeroff, recently authored a special report for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching entitled School and College: Partnerships in Education, in which he wrote, "The jurisdictional boundaries separating schools and colleges are crossed successfully only when institutions on both sides are amenable." Not only have NYCATE and CAWS teachers been amendable, but they have worked together successfully to eradicate that mythical "line" which supposedly separates them.

Marie Jean Lederman
University Dean, Academic Affairs
Director, Instructional Resource Center

INTRODUCTION

"New York Writes," co-sponsored by the New York City Association of Teachers of English (NYCATE) and the CUNY Association of Writing Supervisors (CAWS), was the first articulation conference to be held among teachers of writing in New York City. As such it was planned with excitement about sharing concerns but with trepidation about the effects of merging two heretofore separate groups. Yet as participants on different school levels learned to look at things from one another's perspective, a dialogue began, one which affirmed all that we had in common: our goal to educate students, many of our teaching strategies, and a consensus about the nature of the writing and learning processes. We became aware of the universality, cutting across all grade levels, of our efforts to improve students' writing. The articles published here demonstrate that learning to write is indeed a process, one beginning in kindergarten and proceeding through college. As New York City prepared to celebrate the centennial of the Brooklyn Bridge, we had built another kind of bridge, linking all grades and all boroughs.

Gene Maeroff, education writer for The New York Times, our luncheon speaker, asked a key question:

> Some of you, writing teachers that you are, must sometimes feel like the monks in the monasteries of the Dark Ages, preserving and protecting the printed word for the better day that almost certainly must be ahead. How do you teach writing to youngsters for whom the advertising slogan is the epitome of literature and the daily assault of the sensation banner in The New York Post is journalism?

Here are many of our responses to his question.

Our first group of papers stresses the importance of articulation, both vertically across usual boundaries--elementary, junior and senior high schools, and college--as well as horizontally throughout a single institution. An outgrowth of the New York City Writing Project, itself an arm of the National Writing Project, the Writing Teachers Consortium, outlined by CARLA ASHER, is jointly run by Lehman College and high school faculty to encourage other teachers at Manhattan and Bronx high schools to write and to encourage their students to write. The Queens English Project, described by MAUREEN McFEELY, is a collaborative effort between Queens College and teachers from Queens high schools, which, like the Writing Teachers Consortium, has been expanded to include teachers across the curriculum. LINDA HIRSCH presents a model for assessing faculty perceptions as a prelude to integrating language skills reinforcement across a college's entire curriculum.

New York City teachers are rapidly acquiring the skills necessary to meet the special needs of students whose native language is not English. PHYLLIS ZIEGLER surveys the curricular materials and tests used by the New York City Public Schools to encourage skills integration in ESL instruction. NANCY DUKE S. LAY reports on the conclusions of her research into

the composing processes of Chinese students in a college basic writing course. And RICHARD QUINTANILLA highlights the efforts to articulate ESL programs between the Public Schools and CUNY.

Our third group of papers showcases students at work--what happens and what can happen as they actually write. SHELLEY HARWAYNE describes the impact of transferring the pioneer work of Lucy McCormick Calkins, Donald Graves, and Donald Murray to New York City elementary schools, while BRENDA GREENE explains how research advances in writing and the work of Ken McCrorie have helped her design revision strategies for untrained college writers. ROBERTA BADER emphasizes how important it is for teachers to model for their students the kinds of group behavior and interaction they want their students to emulate. SANDRA SELLERS HANSON and LEONARD VOGT support that process in their description of the peer group activities devised by their college's writing program to help basic writers edit their written products. On quite another note, KAREN GREENBERG's research reminds us of how little we know about the way students work when they must write on an assigned topic within a test situation, and stresses the need for the teacher's thoughtful construction of the "writing task."

All language experiences, from the mundane to the most artistic, can be used in writing classes. This theme, implicit throughout this special issue of Resource, defines our last group of papers. GERALD CHAPMAN speaks about the classroom workshops that the Dramatists Guild sets up to encourage elementary and high school students to write plays. VICTOR HERBERT demonstrates the use of television commercials to promote "creative language usage and acquisition." LEONORE HOFFMANN illustrates how readings in the personal writing of ordinary people can validate the utility and subtle pleasures of writing: "to ease loneliness, to strengthen ties with others, and to share joys and sorrows." Finally, LYNN QUITMAN TROYKA applies the predictive qualities of reading, as theorized by Frank Smith and supported by her own research, to her students' compositions in order to revise their own writing.

These papers, only a selection of those that comprised the conference, reflect notions about the teaching of language, especially of writing, shared among teachers. Now that we--elementary, high school, and college teachers of English--have agreed that connections exist among us and have defined what some of these connections are, it is essential that we continue to cooperate and collaborate. Together, we can forge yet greater links to help bring about a literacy revolution, a way out of the Dark Ages.

Virginia Hackett, President, NYCATE
Linda Stanley, Co-chair, CAWS

TAKING WRITING SERIOUSLY

Gene I. Maeroff
Education Writer, The New York Times

Those of us who take seriously the matter of putting words on paper cannot help but be alarmed by what we see happening around us. There has come of age a generation for whom the printed word is akin to the horse and buggy. Who wants to bother with reading when there is television? Who wants to bother with writing when there are telephones? Reading for pleasure is unnecessary in the era of Pac-Man. And writing to express one's feeling is a waste of effort when the voice blaring its repugnant staccato from a huge box radio can do it for you.

"Many students talk and act as if good writing were a rare, imaginary creature, like the griffin or the unicorn. Even as they set out after it, they hardly believe in its existence, and certainly not in their ability to track it to its hiding place." This was the observation of three faculty members at Stanford University who prepared a writing manual for students.

Some of you, writing teachers that you are, must sometimes feel like the monks in the monasteries of the Dark Ages, preserving and protecting the printed word for the better day that almost certainly must be ahead. How do you teach writing to youngsters for whom the advertising slogan is the epitome of literature and the daily assault of the sensational banner headline in The New York Post is journalism? This is the printed word to them. There is no Thomas Mann because they have never read him. And the names Bellow, Cheever, and Singer might as well adorn the letterhead of a Wall Street law firm. The tree has not fallen in the forest because they did not hear it.

Where does this leave us? It leaves us with woefully too many students who go through school without developing critical thinking skills. The National Assessment of Educational Progress and most of the standardized reading tests reveal that our young people have problems with inferential reasoning.

Should we be surprised? I think not. People who do not write are at a disadvantage in learning how to think. They have not been compelled to organize their thoughts, synthesize their ideas, and marshal their reasons.

Susan Miller in Writing: Process and Product, published by Winthrop, makes this observation:

> Learning to write involves improving your ability to make your ideas real to other people. The terms that may be in your writing text, 'exposition,' 'argumentation,' 'narration,' and description,' all are names for different ways of selecting and arranging the details

of an experience in a way that makes a reader agree with, or at least understand, the idea that you had.....

Recently, I wrote in The New York Times about a bill that was introduced in the Florida Legislature to provide funds for schools that agree to limit the size of writing classes and to have students compose at least one theme a week.

This is what it has come to--legislating writing. At least there is movement. Whether or not this is the best way to get teachers to have students write, it is better than not having students write.

A study by the National Council of Teachers of English found that the average student does little writing other than taking notes and providing short answers on examinations. The teacher is probably both victim and villain in this little drama, playing both Desdemona and Iago. On the one hand, how in the world is a high school teacher who meets with 150 or 200 students a day going to have time to mark compositions if all of the youngsters are turning in papers once or twice a week? On the other hand, you all must know some teachers who seldom require compositions, regardless of how few students they teach, because they do not want to mark the papers.

There are also the teachers who would be willing to have their students write more, but know little about composition themselves, their main interest being literature. They need help and it is up to colleagues at their schools and colleges to give them that assistance.

To some extent, this is happening. I need not elaborate to this group about the National Writing Project. Jim Gray's baby, born in Berkeley, has grown into a strapping infant. The idea, as you know, is to bring together teachers to make them better writers and more appreciative of the elements of good writing. Then, like messengers of the Gospel, they are to carry the good word back to their home schools and spread it among their colleagues, looking for converts wherever they can be found. Ultimately, the beneficiaries are the students, the youngsters taught by teachers who are better teachers of writing.

The National Writing Project is just one such initiative. Other programs have been launched to reach students through their teachers. This is not the forum for discussing such endeavors, but we should take note of their existence.

Perhaps we might better spend our time talking about the state of the art, observing the obstacles to good writing. Earlier this week I wrote about one of the larger of these obstacles--television, the great pacifier. Television, the monster that makes no demands while surreptitiously ennervating children of intellect. A box seat on the 50-yard line of life means not having to play the game. It means watching instead of doing. It means the absence of writing because the medium is the message--or should we say the massage. The printed word is an anachronism to many who have been nurtured on the fleeting electronic image.

It is too easy, though, simply to blame the lapses in writing on television. Before Dr. Sarnoff's magic box appeared there were many for whom writing was not a lost art, but a never-discovered art. It is just that the presence of television makes the whole wretched mess so obvious. It is so much easier to see what has replaced the printed word.

People will write if they think and they will think if they write. A while ago, when elementary school teachers and principals began talking about communications arts, the phrase sounded like jargon. I think, however, that as the years have passed, the phrase has taken on fresh meaning.

What it implies today is the utter folly of trying to divorce reading, writing, speaking, listening, and creative thinking. They are so interdependent that one without the other is Romeo without Juliet, Brooklyn without Flatbush, science fiction without Spielberg.

The crisis is not simply one of writing; it is one of kids who cannot communicate in traditional ways. Kids, and I guess I ought to add former kids, now called adults, for whom the act of writing might mean signing one's name to a check, for whom reading means books about dead cats and diets. Speaking means . . . like, man . . . that's what speaking means. Listening means the personal cacophony of one's Walkman. And thinking means figuring out whether the Heels will beat the Hoyas or whether your fanny looks better in Jordache or Calvins.

This is what you face if you are trying to teach writing.

A FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN THE TEACHING OF WRITING

Carla Asher (With Richard Sterling and Marcie Wolfe)
The Writing Teachers Consortium

Whatever its flaws, the Regents Competency Test (RCT) in writing has certainly caused New York City high schools to place new emphasis on writing.(1) In response to the pressure of the RCT, special writing classes have been formed to prepare students for the exam, school-wide writing policies have been mandated, and new curricula have been written. While these efforts are well-intentioned and may foster some improvement in student writing, they neglect an important ingredient: teacher training. Curriculum guides, textbooks, course outlines, and school-wide mandates do not do much good if the teachers who are to use them lack sufficient training to implement them effectively. The Writing Teachers Consortium, a high school/college articulation program of the New York City Writing Project, has been designed to address the problems of writing competency by training high school teachers of all subjects in the teaching of writing.

We think of English teachers as being more comfortable with teaching writing than our colleagues in other disciplines, but most of us in English have never had a course specifically in the teaching of writing Often, the only writing course taken in college by future teachers of any subject is freshman composition. Now, faced with students who are seriously disabled in writing, we feel powerless and frustrated. When we assign writing, we receive papers which display an enormous range of abilities. Some students write nothing at all, while others write one tortured sentence or several incoherent paragraphs. And the majority of the class does not meet our expectations for clarity, length, and correctness. High school teachers who see over 150 students a day take home piles of papers and correct them conscientiously. We may feel virtuous (and bleary-eyed) from doing this, but the next batch of compositions shows us the futility of our efforts.

It is hard for our colleagues in other departments to find time for writing. They feel pressured to get through packed curricula and to prepare students for city-wide or Regents examinations. When they do assign writing, the results are disappointing: students copy from books for their reports, or respond to essay questions on tests by leaving the space blank or writing as little as possible.

But this is not always the case. Sometimes a colleague down the hall is getting good results or has some good ideas. Unfortunately, there is little opportunity to share them during the school day. Five classes, a homeroom, and cafeteria duty do not leave much time or energy for professional development.

Meanwhile, at the university, current research and theory in the teaching of writing have been supplying some answers to the problems teachers face. But too often, these findings do not get into the classrooms where they must be tested and refined. The National Writing Project has spear-headed a nation-wide effort to bridge this gap between researchers and classroom practitioners by providing teachers with an experiential model informed by current research in the field. The New York City site of the National Writing Project, the New York City Writing Project at Lehman College, has been training teachers in this model of the teaching of writing since 1978 through summer institutes at Lehman College and in-service courses in school districts and teacher centers.

These courses and institutes enable teachers to discover, through an examination of their own writing experiences, how they can teach writing in their classes. Through their experience in the Project, teachers understand the principles underlying the successful teaching of writing and are able to develop materials and techniques which they can implement in their classes.

The New York City Writing Project has become for many of its members much more than a course or an institute. By participating in monthly meetings and small committees and by teaching other teachers at Project in-service courses, Project members can grow professionally. In these various settings they share ideas and expertise and they continue to write together.

In 1980, the directors of the New York City Writing Project, Sondra Perl and Richard Sterling of Lehman College, along with Marcie Wolfe and myself, both New York City high school teachers and Project members, developed a proposal for a project called the Writing Teachers Consortium. We felt that the Writing Teachers Consortium would increase the effectiveness of the New York City Writing Project model. Although the New York City Writing Project has been successful in training individual teachers, some of its members began to feel that it was not having a sufficient impact on the school system. Many teachers trained in summer institutes reported that they felt isolated in their schools. The time pressures of the school day made it difficult for Project teachers to share their new ideas. Colleagues and supervisors who were unfamiliar with the model were indifferent or even hostile to the new techniques with which Project teachers were experimenting. In addition, most of the teachers participating in our Project were still English teachers, often newer teachers who had been motivated to participate at least in part by their need for graduate credits to satisfy licensing requirements. We still needed a way to reach experienced teachers of all subjects. We believed that most teachers would welcome assistance in improving student writing.

The Writing Teachers Consortium, funded in 1981 by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, the New York City Board of Education, and Herbert H. Lehman College, is designed to train Bronx and Manhattan high school teachers in the teaching of writing. It is funded for three years and works in four target schools a year--two in the Bronx and two in Manhattan.

In each target high school, up to 20 teachers a term participate in a course in the teaching of writing which is held after school one day a week. In the courses, which are coordinated by New York City Writing Project teacher-consultants who are themselves classroom teachers, teachers write, analyze their writing processes, participate in small writing response groups, read and discuss current research in the field, share their classroom expertise and collaborate on curriculum projects. In addition, teacher-consultants give presentations of techniques in the teaching of writing. Participants, who are drawn from all departments in a school, also receive support during the school day. Marcie Wolfe and I meet individually with teachers to help them plan writing lessons, to develop teaching materials, to demonstrate effective teaching techniques, and to consult with teachers about problems which arise in using these techniques. Teachers who participate in the program receive either a small stipend or graduate credits from Lehman College.

The Writing Teachers Consortium also conducts retreats and seminars for administrators from the target schools to discuss current research, theory, and practice in the teaching of writing and to inform them about the writing process approach their teachers are using across the curriculum. In the summer, we conduct intensive seminars at Lehman College to train teachers from other Bronx and Manhattan high schools and to provide further training to school writing coordinators. One important goal of the program is to develop an ongoing professional community at each target school, devoted to improving the teaching of writing and supported by committed and informed administrators.

In our first year, 1981-82, the four target schools were the High School of Art & Design and Seward Park High School in Manhattan and Morris High School and Adlai Stevenson High School in the Bronx. At Morris H.S., the 30 teachers who participated in the Consortium represented over 25% of the entire faculty and every department in the school. One department which we had a particular impact on was the Special Education Department. The five special education teachers in the Consortium experimented with substituting such techniques as journal writing and free writing for the copying and rote work that has traditionally been emphasized in special education. In addition, a committee of Consortium teachers collaborated on a curriculum booklet of lessons from different subject areas and samples of student writing done in connection with each lesson.

At the High School of Art & Design, the 28 teachers who participated in the Consortium represented the major departments in the school. Art & Design is a school which specializes in the commercial arts, and many of its graduates attend art colleges or go directly into commercial art fields such as graphic design, advertising, illustration, and fashion design. The Art Department followed a traditional "product" approach, emphasizing the completion of many projects during a term without much attention to how students made creative decisions. The five art teachers in the Consortium asked their students to keep process journals in which they explored ideas for projects, described false starts and eventual successes, and expressed feelings about their final products. English teachers participating in the Consortium worked with art teachers to develop lessons that engaged students in writing and drawing.

At Stevenson High School, several of the English teachers who participated in the Consortium were assigned to teach courses expressly designed to prepare students for the RCT. At the beginning of the year, they expressed frustration with teaching only the business letter, the report, and the persuasive essay. These teachers began to realize that by providing opportunities for their students to write in a variety of modes and for different audiences and purposes, they would also be preparing them for the test. One teacher remarked that now her students look forward to writing in her class instead of dreading it.

At Seward Park High School we had much success with the Health Education Department. The health education teachers in the Consortium had not used much writing in their courses, relying mainly on brief answers to homework questions and multiple-choice tests. As a result of the Consortium, they have designed a health journal for their students, incorporated free writing into their lessons, and even begun experimenting with activities which involve talking and writing, such as role-playing and related point-of-view writing.

The teachers who have participated in the Writing Teachers Consortium have learned more than a repertoire of new techniques. They have learned how to develop writing assignments, how to introduce them to students, how to respond to student writing, how to help students revise writing, and perhaps most important, how to help students use writing to learn. In addition, they have begun to listen to their own voices as writers. In November 1982, the Consortium held publication parties at all four schools to celebrate our anthology, Teachers Writing. Over 100 teachers from the four target schools contributed to it.

Now in its second year, the Writing Teachers Consortium is working in four new target schools: Norman Thomas H.S. and Louis D. Brandeis H.S. in Manhattan and Herbert H. Lehman H.S. and Theodore Roosevelt H.S. in the Bronx. In reflecting on the past year, we feel that several factors are crucial to a successful high school/college articulation program to improve the teaching of writing:

> High school personnel must play a role equal to that of college faculty in planning and implementation. Programs designed without their input and participation are doomed to failure.
>
> The best teacher of teachers is another teacher.
>
> In order to learn how to teach writing, teachers must themselves engage in the composing process.
>
> Teachers of all subjects must be involved in any effort to improve student writing.
>
> The direct involvement of administrators is crucial to informed support of teachers participating in the program.

---

(1) The Regents Competency Testing Program was established to identify students who are deficient in reading comprehension, writing, and mathematics and to assure that students are proficient in these three basic skills before graduation from high school. The RCT in writing is administered in tasks: a business letter of complaint, a report from given data, and a persuasive essay.

THE QUEENS ENGLISH PROJECT

Maureen Connolly McFeely
English Department, Queens College
The City University of New York

The Queens English Project (QEP) is a collaborative effort between Queens College and several Queens high schools to improve the reading and writing skills of college-bound students. It is founded on the belief that there are certain elemental skills common to all readers and writers, regardless of age or experience; that these skills can be taught; and that, once taught, these skills can be practiced with pleasure. Some of these skills are:

* writing from a sense of the whole structure;
* writing prolifically;
* recognizing and gaining control over abstract and concrete language;
* distinguishing between observation and inference;
* rewriting.

It is also based on the belief that these skills are best taught inductively in a class that functions as a workshop, where all writers, including the teacher, are colleagues who take the same risks in writing and reading to each other.

These principles have been put into practice in the Borough of Queens through the participation of high school and college faculty in writing seminars, and through the service of Queens College students who work as tutors in participating schools. In 1981-82 these schools included Beach Channel, Flushing, Grover Cleveland, John Adams, John Bowne, Martin Van Buren, and Richmond Hill.

Federally funded for the first two years of its life (1978-80) under a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), the QEP turned for support to the institutions out of which it had grown--the Board of Education and the Board of Higher Education--when federal funding ended. In a spirit of true collaboration, both institutions have responded with funds.

Furthermore, as an outgrowth of the project, the UFT-sponsored Teacher Centers have begun to offer a course based on the QEP curriculum. Initiated in Spring 1982, "The Pleasure of Structure" offers Queens College graduate credit or Board of Education in-service credit to participating

teachers. And in an ancillary collaborative effort, the Superintendent of Queens high schools sponsored in 1981-82 a writing across the curriculum project, whose purpose was to demonstrate to science and social studies teachers some QEP strategies that could be incorporated in other disciplines. Through the QEP and the projects that have grown from it, Queens College faculty members and Queens high school teachers have collaborated on the teaching of reading and writing in 16 of the borough's 24 high schools.

At the CAWS/NYCATE session, we asked participants to join us in a typical QEP lesson. Paula Weil, an English teacher at John Bowne High School, led the group through the exercise.

Paula did not name or analyze what we were about to do; she simply began by placing three samples of dialogue on the board. She reviewed the placement of punctuation marks and reminded participants that each line of dialogue deserved a paragraph of its own. She explained that we begin with dialogue because all writers can produce dialogue, and it is efficient to begin where writers are able.

She then asked participants to imagine it was the middle of the night and along a dark road came a cow and an elephant. "Write what the cow says to the elephant," she said. We all wrote uninterruptedly for two or three minutes.

"Now write what the elephant says to the cow." We did.

"And what the cow says in reply." Again we wrote.

Next she asked us to imagine a natural catastrophe, such as an earthquake or a storm, and to write a few lines of narrative describing that catastrophe.

"Now," she directed us, "write what the elephant says to the cow." We did.

"And what the cow responded."

We then read over our six paragraphs, skipped a few lines and wrote, "The moral of this fable is . . . ." At her suggestion, we wrote three or four morals because it is easier to try several versions than to aim at one perfect one.

When everyone had finished writing, Paula noted that we had all just written a complete literary structure--the fable. Then all participants, including the "teacher," read their fables around the room.

The energy inherent in the act of writing, the sense of community, grown out of having taken the same risks, and the pleasure of the structure of the fable itself, heard over and over in so many permutations, became evident in such an exercise.

Paula then explained several benefits of beginning with the fable, a whole literary structure, in terms of the skills that QEP students prac-

tice throughout the term. The fable, like the family parable and the essay paradigms that follow it, offers beginning writers a framework on which to hang their ideas. We do not offer them traditional topics, for to do so would mean imposing our ideas on them. In this way we begin to return to the author the authority over his work.

With its concrete narrative and abstract moral, the fable demonstrates in an obvious way these two qualities of all writing. Out of the concrete narrative springs the abstract moral, just as out of our experiences spring our attitudes. This is an important lesson for students whose goal is the expository essay, a form which begins with an abstraction and follows with concrete supporting statements. When beginning writers realize that the concrete precedes the abstract (in the mind if not in the manuscript), they need not be reminded to "put in more details" or "strengthen the supporting paragraphs" of an academic essay.

By asking for several versions of the moral, we begin to develop immediately the critical skill of rewriting. Some students write morals that pick up different themes of a narrative. Others hit upon one idea and write increasingly elegant versions of it. Eventually the whole class produces several different versions of one writer's moral. When we fill the board with these rewritten sentences, we observe not only the vast flexibility of the English language, but the stylistic strengths--the parallelism or punning, for instance--of so many of them.

The remaining skills of prolific writing and distinguishing between observation and inference were not demonstrated at the conference. In the time allotted us, we could only suggest how we use continued fable-writing to introduce these skills. We might, for example, write uninterruptedly for several minutes our observations about a fable or one of its morals. (We define an observation as a statement all can agree upon, and we distinguish it from an inference. "The author must be a sensitive person" is an inference. "The fable uses emotion-laden words like 'cry,' 'suffer,' 'pain,' etc." is an observation.) These observations assure the author that we have listened attentively to his work, and they offer him some basis for revision. Furthermore, having treated each other's writing with the respect due literature, students can go on to make careful observations about the literature of professional writers.

In addition to the uninterrupted writing of observations in class, students keep journals of prolific writing in which they write non-stop for 10 minutes by the clock each night. This structure-free writing complements the structure taught in class and gives the beginning writer a reservoir of material from which to draw.

The QEP classroom is a workshop where students write, read aloud, and write observations about each other's work. In an atmosphere of enthusiasm and support, each student participates actively every day. In such a classroom, students experience the pleasure of writing for an immediate, attentive audience and become increasingly motivated to develop their skills as writers.

We felt that the thirty minutes CAWS/NYCATE participants spent writing and reading their fables to each other demonstrated more forcefully than

any lecture might, not only some of the skills we teach and the inductive method we use, but the spirit of community and collaboration on which we base our project. For more information about the syllabus on which the QEP is based, see Marie Ponsot and Rosemary Deen's Beat Not the Poor Desk (Boynton/Cook, 1982).

DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR LANGUAGE SKILLS INTEGRATION INTO CONTENT AREAS

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The need to teach reading and writing throughout the curriculum is being increasingly recognized by educators across the nation. Large numbers of schools are implementing programs of skills reinforcement as they come to realize that students will not master basic skills if their use is limited only to English classes and that writing actually enhances the learning of a discipline. As these institutions confront the need to establish such programs, they must grapple with the best ways of initiating them. How can the interest of faculty (particularly content area faculty) be generated? How can maximum faculty input be obtained? In what ways can and should administrative support be evidenced? What early steps can be taken to ensure the success of the project?

In the spring of 1981 Hostos Community College formed a task force with the charge of devising a school-wide plan for the integration of skills into subject area courses. As chairperson of this Task Force on the Integration of ESL/English Language Skills into Content Areas, I worked with skills and content faculty to find answers to these pressing questions and to lay the groundwork for the college's skills reinforcement efforts.(1)

We founded our work on the premise that a school's skills integration program would succeed only if it involved, from its earliest stages, all faculty and not just teachers of reading and writing. All too often skills reinforcement programs are perceived as projects imposed upon content faculty by English teachers who have little understanding of the needs of subject area faculty. At Hostos there appeared to be agreement that students did not have sufficient mastery of the skills needed to succeed in content classes. Yet the specific skills which needed reinforcing had never been designated beyond the broad recognition of student "problems" in reading, writing, critical thinking, study skills, and oral communication. Though English and ESL teachers were receiving feedback that they were not adequately preparing students for work in content courses, it remained to be determined just what specific skills were needed to successfully master content disciplines. Furthermore, while English teachers were developing a growing sense of the need for their colleagues in other disciplines to reinforce skills in their classes, there was little real communication as to how content teachers actually felt about this added responsibility. The task force thus decided that

its first step would be to accurately determine students' skills needs and faculty attitudes towards skills reinforcement.

To this end, it developed and distributed a needs analysis questionnaire which would afford content faculty in all departments an opportunity to assess the skills needs of their students, to provide information as to the kinds and amount of writing currently undertaken in content classes, and to express their views on skills integration. The questionnaire was designed to be concise, taking no more than 15 to 20 minutes to complete, but comprehensive enough to provide the task force with a clear understanding of content faculty perceptions of student needs. Of equal importance, the distribution of the needs analysis questionnaire signified that skills integration was a school-wide concern requiring the input of as many people as possible.

The questionnaire was divided into four major categories and sought faculty responses to the following:

I. What do you honestly feel are the skills needed for the enhancement of student performance and the achievement of the goals of your course? Please cover the following areas, referring to the cover sheet if you like:

1. What are the study skills needed? (if any)
2. What are the reading skills needed? (if any)
3. What are the writing skills needed? (if any)
4. What are the critical thinking skills needed? (if any)
5. What are the oral communication skills needed? (if any)

II. What are the number and types of papers (e.g., critical essay, reaction paper, lab report, research paper) that you assign each semester? How many? What type? Length? What kinds of tests do you give? (short answer, essay, etc.)

III. Do you feel that content area faculty have responsibility for the improvement of students' English language skills?

IV. Comments--What are your suggestions for integrating English language skills into content areas?

To avoid responses which might be too general, faculty were provided with a cover sheet which outlined a number of specific subskills the task force had identified as vital to student success in reading, writing, critical thinking, and study skills. For example, the skill of reading was broken down into the subskills of 1) interpreting information from graphs, charts, tables, and maps; 2) finding the main idea; 3) seeing relationships, e.g., cause and effect, comparison and contrast; 4) drawing conclusions and making predictions; 5) distinguishing fact from opinion; 6) understanding vocabulary (context clues); 7) locating specific information and skimming to locate information; and 8) understanding figurative language. Critical thinking was identified as the ability to 1) analyze, 2) evaluate, 3) apply learned concepts, and 4) draw inferences and conclusions. Similar breakdowns were provided for writing and study skills. Though we by no means intended the list of subskills to be ex-

haustive, we believe it helped avoid vague responses and enabled faculty to better focus their concerns. Space was provided for extensive replies, and faculty were informed that the cover sheet was meant to aid but not to dictate responses. Significantly, most respondents did make use of the cover sheet but also supplemented their responses by recounting their particular classroom experiences. The task force was thus provided with a thorough picture of the skills needs of the Hostos student body.

To ensure a large sampling of responses, the questionnaire was distributed to all content faculty and was administered by task force members at various department meetings. Respondents were instructed to reply anonymously and identify themselves by department only. This insured candor while providing needed data.

If our goal of establishing skills integration as a school-wide effort was to be met, we realized that we had a further responsibility to promptly tabulate and share our findings. Prompt feedback would underscore our commitment and counter initial concern that not much would come of these responses--a telling indication of previous faculty experiences! Responses were statistically analyzed by skill and content area to provide a detailed account of the skills each department viewed as essential for student success in meeting course objectives. Responses pertaining to the types and lengths of papers and exams assigned, as well as faculty commitment to skills integration, were also made available. The task force used the forum of a college-wide faculty meeting to distribute its findings. Faculty and staff were provided with a narrative summary which highlighted our major findings and charts which statistically broke down responses by department and skill. Thus faculty could readily compare individual department needs as well as identify common concerns. The administration underscored its support by allocating time for me to address the faculty and discuss the results and implications of the task force's findings. In addition, our findings were summarized and publicized through in-house publications for faculty, staff, and students.

The needs analysis questionnaire and the responses to it formed the basis of the task force's "Plan for the Integration of Basic Skills into Content Areas at Hostos Community College." I emphasize that the plan developed was designed to meet the specific needs of the Hostos student and the Hostos faculty. If a skills integration plan is to succeed, it must be tailored to the unique needs of an institution. The Hostos needs analysis questionnaire and the college-wide distribution and discussion of its results, enabled the task force to develop a framework for the further reinforcement of English language skills into subject area courses. More important, it was instrumental in calling attention to the need for a skills integration program and in making the reinforcement of skills a cooperative endeavor in which English teachers and content teachers worked in concert to best meet the academic needs of their students.

(1) Task force members were Eugenio Barrios (Biology), Shirley Hinds (Allied Health), Lewis Levine (English), Pat Oldham (Behavioral/Social Sciences), Bettye Van Buren (Visual and Performing Arts), Alfredo Villanueva (English), and Frances Webb (English).

INSTRUCTING AND ASSESSING ESL STUDENTS IN THE NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS: AN OVERVIEW

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Language, the most advanced of human behaviors, has been the center of study in many fields, including linguistics, psychology, and pedagogy. It is generally accepted as the foundation of education: it is both a product and an expression of the culture in which it develops. The acquisition of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing is a process that combines the experiential with academic, disciplined training.

The New York City Public Schools approach the communication arts both for students of limited English proficiency and for native speakers of English from many perspectives. Great emphasis is placed on writing. An understanding of the philosophy underlying instruction in the communication arts can be derived from an examination of some of the curriculum guides and materials in use, as well as from an understanding of the formal testing program which is administered to students under city and state mandates.

For students of limited English proficiency, instruction in English as a second language should always incorporate the four language skills. The Office of Bilingual Education of the New York City Public Schools has attempted to foster this goal in a number of its publications. Curriculum Standards: English as a Second Language (Grades 3-8) Guide, for example, gives teachers a basis from which to develop lessons which integrate skills through a holistic approach. By combining the grammatical, situational, and functional approaches, the ESL teacher can stress both the importance of the use of language (language function) as well as its discrete skills (language code). This guide and English Communication Arts for Second Language Learners provide valuable information and outline techniques on which to base an instructional program.

Opening the Gates Through ESL is a resource guide which contains a variety of language activities based on themes drawn from the science, social studies, and language arts curricula for fourth and seventh grades. In order to provide for variety in the classroom and accommodate differences in learning style, activities are presented for whole-group and individualized instruction, and are designed to reinforce structures and vocabulary through the four language skills. The choice of highlighted structures was based on an item analysis of evaluation instruments currently in use to determine promotion for limited English proficient students in grades four and seven.

The overall goal of ESL instruction is the acquisition of communicative and linguistic competence. ESL students exit from second language in-

struction when they demonstrate through formal assessment procedures that they have acquired sufficient competence to perform on a par with their native counterparts of a similar age or grade.

The achievement of communicative and linguistic competence in English by non-native speakers can be enhanced through the development of their native language proficiency. The Division of Curriculum and Instruction publication entitled Minimum Teaching Essentials Grades K-9 points to the fact that increasing effectiveness in language processes is based on two important premises (p.39):

> When children arrive in school they already have achieved a degree of proficiency in at least one spoken language.
>
> This ability is the beginning and the central tool for all learning which will ensue in the student's years of schooling.

As the Canadian language researcher Jim Cummins has explained, one does not learn to read a specific language; rather, one learns to read. Therefore, students whose cognitive development has taken place in a language other than English should not be held back in the development of their reading and writing skills until they are ready to develop them in English. The native language can be capitalized on as a source of transference of skills as well as developed to full literacy. Likewise, early and ongoing second language instruction for English speakers can contribute to the pool of multilingual Americans, a resource sorely needed by this country. The concept of multilingualism is in consonance with the philosophy underlying the New York State plan called Education for a Global Perspective

Teachers concerned with the development of a student's first language can take advantage of both the research and the commercially available materials that deal with second language acquisition. Emphasis on the intensive development of listening and speaking skills in combination with advancement in reading and writing is a key element in building the competence of all language learners.

The communication arts subsection of the aforementioned Minimum Teaching Essentials Grades K-9 provides the core curriculum for each grade in three strands: listening and speaking, reading and literature, and writing. There is a proviso, however, that this division is merely for ease of organization (p. 40). The skills are to be integrated in appropriate learning experiences. This holistic methodology is treated in great depth in the materials of the Instructional Management Project Communication Arts (IMPCA). The activities in these manuals, which have been published for grades K-3 and are projected through junior high school level, are developed with a high degree of specificity. As the guide explains, this specificity not only helps illustrate the interrelated nature of the four language skills, but also provides the teacher with a description of the process by which classroom interaction may be maximized and utilized most effectively.

Another source of reference published by the Division of Curriculum and Instruction for New York City teachers is the volume entitled Writing Com-

petently: A Handbook for Teachers. This guide is designed to help students build the strengths needed to meet the standards set forth in the New York State Regents Competency Tests in Writing. The program was created in order to confront the major problem areas that were noted in an analysis of competency tests already administered: difficulty in expressing one's ideas in writing, understanding of the task, organization of materials, lack of familiarity with writing conventions, standard usage, sentence sense, and spelling.

A publication which concentrates on writing in the secondary schools is Writing Every Day Generates Excellence (WEDGE). This practical guide covers the following topics: getting started; the four modes of writing; meshing writing with literature; revising, editing, and proofreading; grammar, sentence sense, and mechanics; and responding, diagnosing, and evaluating student writing. A checklist is included which describes the ideal writing classroom. The teacher strategies, activities materials, and sample lessons are aimed directly at achieving the major goal of helping students learn to write.

The Office of Bilingual Education has written in Spanish the curriculum and performance standards for the four language skills, grades four and seven. There are plans to develop similar documents for other grade levels and other language groups.

From the objectives delineated in these Spanish publications, a set of tests has been developed for placement, diagnosis, and prescription. Similarly, a version of the ESL curriculum has been used to develop English language tests for second language learners. These criterion-referenced instruments are known as the Language Assessment Management Systems. Each grade (four and seven) has five separate tests (one placement and four levels) in the four skills for Spanish and English--a total of 80 different instruments. When writing performance is assessed, for instance, individual student results can be correlated to the prescriptive taxonomy found in the teacher's guides.

Another vehicle for writing assessment is found in the Language Assessment Battery-82 (LAB), a new set of tests in English and Spanish in the four skill areas. These tests are administered to students in order to comply with the Aspira Consent Decree, a New York City decision for Hispanic school children, and Lau v. Nichols (1974), a federal decision for speakers of any language other than English. Both provide for equal educational opportunity for limited English proficient students. The LAB has four levels covering grades K-12, and two parallel forms (A and B) in English and Spanish. The norming tables include percentile ranks for each language skill subtest and for the overall test in each language. This data can be used for grouping and planning.

Beginning in June 1980, the Promotional Policy was put into effect by the Board of Education. Although the Policy covers grades K-9, the fourth and seventh grades were established as "gates." Students have to demonstrate certain levels of competency before they can be promoted from these grades. Reading and mathematics scores on standarized tests are currently considered in determining promotion. By the spring of 1983, a writing assessment instrument will also be in place. The projected assessment will

involve a personal narrative, which will be marked holistically on a scale from one to six. Pilot testing is taking place, and rubrics and criteria for evaluation are being determined.

In 1979, New York State mandated writing tests as part of its competency testing program. Eighth graders who do not demonstrate adequate competency on the Preliminary Competency Tests (PCTs) are slated for remediation, as are ninth graders who do not pass on a second try. The writing test involves a letter, a report, and a composition that are graded holistically. In eleventh grade, students must take the Regents Competency Tests (RCTs), and those who fail may take them again in the twelfth grade. A student who does not pass the RCTs in reading, mathematics, and writing will not receive a high school diploma. A high school that does not have a certain pass rate may be denied accreditation. In order to ascertain the need for remediation before eighth grade, a fifth-grade competency test in writing that is now being field tested will be added to the already existing testing program in the spring of 1983.

The materials, approaches, and testing instruments treated in this presentation were selected for review on the basis of their interest to the audience at this conference. They represent but a small number of the many publications and activities of the New York City Public Schools. The development of language skills and of students' interest in learning about themselves and others is a part of an overall effort to provide ever-improving preparation for today's youth in order to assure their success tomorrow.

NATIVE LANGUAGE AND THE COMPOSING PROCESS

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ESL/bilingual students who are inexperienced writers not only must learn the rules of English grammar and the conventions of usage and syntax, but how to handle the rather long and complicated process of composing itself. My research sought to determine how Chinese students compose in English. I was particularly interested in the following questions:

> How is the composing process difficult for ESL students?
> How much of the native language is used in the composing process of second-language learners?
> Is there a pattern in the use of the native language in their composing processes?

I used the methodology employed by Emig and Perl(1) of observing students while they composed aloud. It is certainly clear that composing aloud is a very difficult, artificial, and at times distracting procedure. While it is definitely not the same as writing, it does present a detailed description of students' writing activities, the order in which these activ-

ities occur, and the time needed for each. Composing aloud is an especially useful methodology for working with ESL students because it reveals how they use their native language while writing in English.

The Study

Five students from City College were asked to participate in this study. They first wrote an essay in Chinese. They were given the same topic and allowed to write for about 30 minutes. The Chinese essays, evaluated by a native speaker, not the researcher, made it possible to measure the students' proficiency in their native language.

These students then met with me four times. Sessions one, two, and four were devoted to writing three essays in English while composing aloud, thus externalizing their thinking process as much as possible during each session. The third session was used to interview the students about their perceptions and memories of writing. The questions asked in the interview session were given ahead of time rather than on the spot because it was difficult for these students to answer immediately, especially when they were asked to recall past experiences.

Emig and Perl focused on reflexive and extensive modes in their studies. However, my study made use of the descriptive/narrative and argumentative modes. Chinese writing courses concentrate on narration in order to introduce knowledge, to give advice, and to arouse interest. The argumentative mode is seldom found in Chinese rhetorical texts and if so, it is usually not emphasized. Since Chinese students find it most difficult to write argumentative essays, this mode was included in my study. The schedule looked like this:

First session	narration/description
Second session	argumentative essays
Third session	interview/writing profile
Fourth session	free choice of topic

By the second and third composing sessions, students felt more relaxed. They were becoming more familiar with the procedure, and 'composing' itself. In the last composing session, the subjects were asked to write and compose on a topic of their own choice. It took a little more time for them to start because they found it difficult to decide on an appropriate topic.

In all sessions students were instructed to go over their English essays line by line immediately after they finished writing and to indicate reasons for changes or revision. They were guided by a list of questions requiring them to give reasons for changes they made on their papers.

I developed a format for transcribing the multi-level data generated at almost every point of utterance of the study. This original format included notations on composing, native language switches, translation, and the written text. The composing/text sheet focused only on sections where the first language, in this case Chinese, came into play, and I did content analyses on those sections.

Analysis

The process of composing aloud is definitely difficult, as evidenced by silences, which ranged from 1.3 to 3.5 minutes. This shows that these students may have been thinking but were unable to voice their thoughts. Also, the use of the tape recorder, especially with the researcher present, was threatening to this group of students. They felt more comfortable with the composing process when they were left alone. However, they used many of the strategies used by native language students in composing--rereading topics, going back and forth in the text, reevaluating organization, asking questions, and changing vocabulary.

The use of the native language in pre-writing was interesting. One student in the study employed Chinese in his "brainstorming sheet" or, as he called it, "dump sheet." He wrote the characters for the word "experience" alongside the English word in this first essay because it was the most important word. He said that writing Chinese with English helped him pick up possible materials for writing. What the student meant was that the Chinese characters, because of their visual representation, helped him to get a stronger impression and association of ideas for the essay. He wrote these Chinese characters because they appeared in his mind at the time of writing or, as he put it, "for the purpose of reflecting my thinking process." Overall, the students varied in their pre-writing strategies: overlapping pre-writing and writing; note-taking and outlining on a brainstorming sheet; only reading the essay topic again and again; and pre-writing before each paragraph. In general, the better writers spent more time in pre-writing (planning).

Even while writing their essays, students often switched languages at the word, phrase, and sentence levels. In essays with more native language switches, the quality was better in terms of vocabulary, sentence structures, and organization. Students who used native language in their composing also monitored mostly in their native language.

This situation is explained by the fact that in the process of developing language skills, there are 'natural' stages that cannot be skipped. In other words, there is a period of language development in which second-language learners have to use their native language. At this stage, it is useless to force them not to use their native language to think, for to do so is to take away their associations and past experiences. As their language skills become stronger, their use of the native language will diminish.

Certain topics induce more native language switches. In topic 1, they were asked to describe a place. When the place they chose was in China or involved relatives, the writers used more Chinese because they had to go back to the place in order to rebuild the experience. In the process of rebuilding, the language of that time and place appeared in the words, the phrases, and the things talked about. For them to find the right equivalents in English was not an easy task.

Students also tend to think in Chinese as they search for help when asked to write about an unfamiliar topic. But if they are writing about a

topic they have read about in English or in some way associate with English, then to think in Chinese is probably not helpful.

Three of the five students in this study did their revising only while writing, making no changes after completing their essays. The two students who went back to revise after completing their essays made only minimal changes consisting of crossing out words, phrases, and sentences, and correcting punctuation. Both groups of students were able to give an explanation for each change they made.

Implications for Teaching

For beginning students, topics that are closer to their experiences will definitely be easier to write about. In addition, we have to help them with the vocabulary and structures needed to write because at this stage these students are still thinking in their native language. In the classroom, we have to be aware that not all students are at the same stage of development and to treat them all alike is to disregard their individual processes of language development.

Topics that are not personal or not directly related to students' experiences should be introduced gradually. However, it is important to give students plenty of reading related to these issues and topics and to have good discussions of them. Second-language students think and compose in English if accompanying materials are understood, read, and absorbed in English. They also compose in English when writing propositional, comparison and contrast essays because these rhetorical modes are learned here in this country.

Two of the research techniques I used in this study also have implications for the classroom. Teachers should encourage students to compose aloud in class. Very often, students say, "I know that," when what they actually want to say is, "I think I know that." The idea seems to exist in their minds, but when asked to verbalize it, they are not sure what they really mean. Composing aloud is also a good language practice exercise. It is not easy for many students but it becomes easier after awhile. It is especially good for Chinese students who normally do not talk much in the classroom. The students in this study were able to produce hours of tape.

Second-language students also seem to become more aware of their errors if they are asked to answer for every change they make while revising. Discussion after writing between teachers and students is very helpful for both. As the teacher asks more questions, students probe their own thinking processes. The more they understand the process, the more they are able to improve their writing skills.

The Chinese students in this study wanted to make sure that whatever was recorded was in acceptable form. This probably was a cultural manifestation and is not necessarily true of all ESL students. Chinese students are very concerned about "losing face." Also, even among the Chinese, there are many different types of students. Although the students in this study had been in this country for 4 or 5 years and had come from China to Hong Kong and then to the United States some were "stronger" in their native language which means that they willingly and

openly identified themselves with the native language. These students produced fuller and richer essays.

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(1) Janet Emig, The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders (Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1971) and Sondra Perl, "The Composing Process of Unskilled College Writers," RTE, (December 1979), pp. 317-336.

ARTICULATING ESL INSTRUCTION IN NEW YORK CITY HIGH SCHOOLS AND CUNY

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Every year thousands of bilingual New York City high school graduates enter the 17 colleges and universities of the City University of New York (CUNY). An overwhelming majority of these students move without special academic attention directly into generally successful college study. But a significant number of them annually must enroll in courses designed to enable them to overcome their still limited proficiency in English before they can undertake a full-time course of study and complete CUNY requirements for a degree. Other Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students at CUNY include numerous recent high school graduates from abroad and foreign-born adults studying for an American degree or enrolled in college for the first time in their lives.

No one has ever conducted a survey to determine exactly how many LEP bilinguals in CUNY ESL programs are recent graduates of New York City high schools, but most CUNY ESL and writing skills teachers would agree that they represent a sizeable group and a problem of major proportions. In some CUNY programs, fully a third of these students must repeat courses before moving on to higher levels of instruction. Many spend two and three years in ESL and basic reading and writing skills classrooms before they can start working in earnest for their degrees. What are the city high schools doing to improve the English language and basic skills of these students before they ever get into college?

The New York City Board of Education has been aware all along of the serious and complicated problem posed by increasing numbers of LEP students in the public schools and has facilitated the establishment of many successful ESL and bilingual programs at every level. School administrators in the downtown Brooklyn offices of the Board can hardly ignore an LEP population in the schools of nearly 85,000 students. In the high schools alone, approximately 19,000 LEP students were identified in the 1980-81 school year. These are very large numbers and, even with a total city school population of 961,000, represent nearly 9% of all students.

There are LEP students in every one of the 32 school districts in the city and in most of the schools. In the 1980-81 school year, 27% of all public elementary and junior high schools in New York City had an LEP pop-

ulation of at least ten percent. Thus, the individual schools cannot ignore the needs of LEP pupils and must provide special instructional programs for them. The quality of these programs, which include ESL or ESL/bilingual instruction, varies from school to school. Methods and materials, level of teaching expertise, amount of instructional time, and other English language learning factors can differ greatly from one school to another. Of most significance, uniform standards for ESL or ESL/bilingual instruction in the city schools have not yet been achieved.

In regard to standards in the English language instruction of LEP pupils in New York City public schools, we should examine the impact of city and state skills testing programs only recently established. The new Gates promotional policy of the Chancellor of New York City Public Schools and the State-wide New York Regents Competency Testing Program have already begun to have a positive effect on results achieved in ESL and ESL/bilingual programs city wide.

The new public schools promotional policy requires that students demonstrate adequate skills development in reading, writing, and math by the end of fourth and seventh grades. Pupils failing to do so are identified for remedial instruction in the schools' Gates Program. LEP students are not exempted from promotional policy criteria but must meet English language requirements commensurate with the amount of time spent in ESL or ESL/bilingual instruction.

At the high school level, the Regents Competency Testing (RCT) Program likewise does not exempt LEP students. Like other students, LEP pupils are obliged to pass reading, writing, and math exams in order to meet graduation requirements. Those LEP high school students who have been in the state for less than four years may qualify for an alternative testing procedure which includes reading, writing, and math exams translated into their native language and an ESL test to show English language proficiency. In 1981, a total of 524 LEP students in the state took one or more alternative procedure exams to meet graduation requirements.

The total of LEP students needing the alternative procedure to meet RCT requirements is expected to increase somewhat in coming years, as the overall LEP population in the high schools increases. It is important to note, however, that most bilingual students graduating from New York City high schools have been able to meet RCT requirements in English.

It can be said that the impact of the RCT program on the instruction of LEP students in the high schools has been successfully absorbed. The program has also had a positive effect on the setting of standards in ESL. ESL teachers and students have risen to the RCT challenge, avoiding the disastrous failure rate that had been anticipated by many. Individual high schools have modified their ESL programs to address the functional literacy focus of these tests. Reading and writing skills are now introduced at the earliest level of ESL instruction. An integrative approach to the four skills from the first day of ESL, rather than the traditional audio-lingual model of language acquisition emphasizing oral skills, has become the norm in most high schools. Significantly, writing instruction in ESL, as reflected by RCT results over the past two years, has improved. The competency tests have also probably led to the expansion of ESL pro-

grams in the high schools. In 1981-82, there were 70 high schools in the city which provided ESL programs. This is the highest total ever.

The Chancellor's promotional policy and the RCT Program were established for all students, after all, and do not focus primarily on the instruction of LEP students. Thus, there still exists a clear need in New York City high schools for a greater uniformity of ESL standards, for more periods of ESL instruction and a greater reinforcement of English in content and non-content classes (especially in bilingual programs), and for an emphasis on preparing students with the study skills necessary for academic success in the English language classroom. ESL instruction in New York City high schools is effective on the whole, but much remains to be done to articulate success between levels of learning.

The specially funded ESL Unit of the Division of High Schools has been the one central agency of the Board of Education to fulfill the function of coordinating ESL instruction in the high schools and to devote attention to the articulation of ESL in the secondary schools and colleges in the city. Through its teacher training and program development activities, the ESL Unit has worked with many classroom teachers and supervisors to define ESL instruction for the city high schools. Determining ESL goals for the high schools which articulate w th expectations of the colleges has been a continuing concern of the ESL Unit and of many ESL teachers in the schools, particularly in specially funded programs.

Curiously, but perhaps understandably, it has been the ESL programs in the more problem-ridden high schools that have tended to point the way in the instruction of LEP students. Confronted with the very difficult and complex problems of teaching economically and educ.. ionally disadvantaged LEP pupils, but provided with special federal and state funds to meet the greater demands, the personnel in these ESL programs have worked diligently and creatively to resolve issues that in other schools are hardly examined.

Specially funded ESL programs in the high schools have tended to provide more periods, more levels, and more innovative ESL/bilingual courses than programs in schools with low numbers of disadvantaged LEP students. City high schools, through the Division of High Schools, would not have as much information and know as much about teaching LEP students without the experience of the specially funded ESL Unit and programs in the schools. A parallel can be drawn between these special high school programs for LEP students and the specially funded basic skills programs at CUNY, which have attained a high level of success since they were at first so inauspiciously introduced into the colleges.

The difference in the high schools is that ESL programs overall may not be as highly developed as are CUNY basic skills programs. CUNY expectations point to more comprehensive ESL/bilingual programs in the high schools that develop study skills, listening comprehension, and writing ability for academic success in English. ESL goals in the high schools, which now include a focus on writing for functional purposes and on use of the cloze procedure to promote reading performance, still tend to emphasize mastery of grammatical structures and reading comprehension. At

beginning and intermediate levels of ESL, the development of oral skills is the primary concern, which is proper especially with recently arrived LEP pupils.

ESL curriculums in the city high schools can only be characterized as grammar-based, though the introduction of new texts and the influence of competency testing for functional skills have begun to modify actual classroom instruction toward communicative-oriented objectives. Teachers now include lessons focusing on critical thinking and problem solving skills, on comprehension of extended discourse, and on activities--such as role-playing--aimed at development of communicative competence.

In some high schools, special ESL classes have been organized for English-fluent LEP students--that is, pupils who speak fluently, but with a great many grammatical errors and a limited vocabulary range and who read and write poorly. In the past, these students might not have been identified for ESL instruction, since a great many are long-time residents or even New York City-born.

Thus, the city high schools try to respond to the difficult and complex educational problems they face, albeit often not in a concerted manner. The articulation of ESL instruction in the high schools with CUNY expectations is a problem that requires much more attention than it has received either from the Board of Education or CUNY itself. Individual high schools, with some help from central offices, achieve great successes in the instruction of LEP students. The honor rolls of graduating seniors are filled every June with the names of students who spoke little English upon entering the 8th, 9th, or even the 10th grade. However, a comprehensive approach to the provision of ESL instruction enabling college-bound LEP students in every high school to make a smooth transition into college study in English does not now exist.

Nevertheless, progress in this area continues, in spite of the perennial cutbacks in educational resources we have come to live with in New York City. The knowledge, skills, and experience gained in teaching LEP students in the high schools and CUNY will not be so easily lost.

On a positive note, the New York State Education Department has completed field testing its "Core Curriculum for ESL in the Secondary Schools." It is expected that in time this curriculum will establish a greater uniformity of standards for ESL instruction in the high schools, not only in New York City but throughout the state. One of the main features of this curriculum is the inclusion of a transitional level of ESL, which focuses on those reading, writing, cultural, communication, and study skills necessary for an ESL student to function fully in regular academic study in English. The state ESL curriculum should be helpful in setting goals for LEP students in the secondary schools and in clarifying college expectations for bilingual students before graduation from high school.

GOOD WRITERS AT WORK

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The invitation, "CM SEE AR FIV NU CHIKS," is posted outside the kindergarten. Peering through the doorway, I see an energetic group of five-year-olds scattered throughout the large classroom. Some are sitting on woven mats reading to one another from colorful scraps of paper. Others are at their desks, using markers to draw and write their books and pieces. Several children are using real writer's tools--scissors and tape. A few children are stretched out on the floor, taking time to think and dream.

Jeremy looks up from his work and notices me standing in the doorway:

"Hi Jeremy, would you like to show me the new chicks?"

"How did you know they hatched?" he asks.

"I read your sign!"

"Oh, I forgot we put it there," he announces with great pride.

Jeremy's teacher has created a writing environment for her students, as have many of the teachers at P.S. 230 in Brooklyn's District 15. The kindergarten scene, one of good writers at work, is repeated throughout the grades in this public elementary school.

The teachers at P.S. 230 have worked hard to encourage good writers at work. Their writing program is called Writers' Workshop. It is part of a large movement based on the research and writing of Don Murray, Donald Graves, and Lucy McCormick Calkins. The Workshop teachers know that children will understand that writing is a "process" when they are asked to do what professional writers do. The children are therefore led through the professional writer's cycle of craft.

As I visit different grade classrooms, I realize that the cycle remains the same for all children. The authors begin by rehearsing their writing. Andrew, a first-grader, is drawing a scene to explain how he learned to play checkers. Nicole, a second-grader, is storytelling her piece about a lost kitten before she begins to write. Jennifer, a sixth-grader, explains how she rehearsed her piece at home and came to school ready to write. "Rehearsal" means the same to all these students. It is time to get ready to write, a time to pick your own topic and collect your thoughts.

The authors in Writers' Workshop reveal different preferences and strategies for drafting and revising. Josh, a kindergarten student, is writing in a blank draft book. Melissa, a third-grader, is using an index card for her first draft; Daniel, a fifth-grader, always writes his drafts on yellow legal pads. Revision, the heart of the writing process, is also approached differently by different students, but all students are experimenting with ways to make their pieces better.

Peer and teacher conferences often help the writer see a need to revise and a direction for the revision. After Glenn, a kindergarten student, shared his first draft--

> I went to MY KZZS HOME
> AND I STR OV MY CZN HOME
> AND I PD,

his classmates really tried to understand his story. He revised his piece by expanding it so that his friends would know what he played. Glenn wrote on,

> And I PD with my GAM AND THE
> NAM IS BATTL STR GAGALAKTICA
> I HAD A LOT OF FUM.

Nancy, a third-grader, shared the beginning of her first draft of "Getting Chicken Pox" with a conference partner.

> It was morning. I looked out the
> window and there it was, on my
> hand, a pinpel. I told my mother.

Her conference partner responded, "Nancy, I'm not sure I understand what looking out the window has to do with getting the chicken pox." In order to clarify her own meaning, Nancy walked to the classroom window and re-enacted her scene. She then revised her lead--

> It was morning. I looked out the window.
> I croz my arms in frcnt of me on the
> window sle and I noticed a pinpel on
> my hand.

Lena, a fourth-grader, also felt the need to revise after her friend helped her to focus her writing. Lena began by describing the day she made communion. She included everything from waking up in the morning until going to sleep again at night. Lena improved her piece by deciding to write only about how she recited special prayers at church. She revised with successive drafts. Her final draft read--

> "OH NO, IT'S COMMUNION DAY"
>
> "Well it's my turn to read," I thought.
> I'm walking to the altar with stage fright. I
> go so fast! "Well here we go," I was saying
> to myself. "Let's pray for all the sick people

and children. Lord, hear our prayer."

"Oh, no. I said the wrong line, "I thought to myself. I hope my face isn't turning red."

My mother is mouthing to me to go on to line number two. I'm mouthing back O.K. By the time I finished everyone was going biserk looking for where I was up to.

Well I'm finished! Ding, dong, ding, dong the church bells are ringing. That's just great, it's perfect! I finally finished my communion. Whee!

James, a sixth-grader, returned to school after working on a television movie. His first draft told eveything you ever wanted to know about filming a movie. A conference helped James to organize his draft into a book. He began his revision by working out a table of contents. It read--

Chapters

1 - Meeting famous people
2 - Playing games during recess
3 - Being in the classroom
4 - Having accidents during production
5 - Making a film

James was now ready to draft one chapter at a time. His content had become manageable.

When authors are satisfied with their content, the drafts become final and are ready to be edited. Kindergarten children, as well as sixth graders, understand that now is the time for authors to look at form, to check for language and mechanics. Children are given the responsibility to edit their own work before asking for the teacher's final editing notes. Writers' Workshop teachers then look for the "teachable moments" to teach the conventional markers in context.

John writes about the time he learned to ride a two-wheeler. His friends don't appreciate how strongly he wants his last line, "I did it," to sound. His teacher shows him the exclamation point, and John learns punctuation eagerly and well, in context. Edited pieces are then written over perfectly on white paper.

Publishing is the last stage of the professional writer's cycle of craft. Children select their favorite pieces to be published in individual books, anthologies, or class magazines.

Exploring the professional writer's cycle of craft does not insure that children will become good writers at work. The teachers in District 15 have learned that time, routine, and an awareness of the qualities of good writing are also important to improving the skills of writers.

Writing process requires time. The students write three to five times a week, an hour each time. Writing process requires set routines. The young authors know what is expected of them and no time is wasted because they don't know where the paper is or what to do after editing. Writing process requires a look at the qualities of good writing. Children learn about point of view, mood, setting details, and strong leads in order to improve their skills as writers.

Visiting the writing classrooms in P.S. 230 is an energizing experience. Children enjoy doing what professional writers do. They fully accept the responsibility for their own writing when the classroom environment makes it safe to do so. As I left the building, I passed the kindergarten room again. Jeremy was standing at the door with marker in hand. The invitiation now read,

SIKS
"CM SEE AR XXX NU CHIKS."

ENCOURAGING REVISION IN COLLEGE BASIC WRITING CLASSES

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Adult students in college basic writing classes present the writing instructor with an especially challenging situation. These students have either experienced failure in various educational environments, been removed from an academic situation for a period of time, or been part of an educational system where an adequate command of written Standard English has not been demanded. Some have experienced a combination of all of the above. In addition, their writing problems have multifold causes, including limited writing experiences and exposure to pedagogical approaches which have not been successful.

Suddenly, these students are confronted with a mandatory course which requires adequate mastery of written Standard English, a task which may appear awesome to them. Their task may be further complicated by the fact that they may be fluent and effective speakers; their only difficulty is expressing their ideas in writing. The task of instructors of basic writing is therefore multifaceted. They must help students develop command of and fluency in written Standard English, as well as communicate to them that writing is a way of making meaning by developing ideas for a specific audience, a process whereby ideas are explored, clarified, and refined. In this way, students can begin to understand the nature of writing and to view it as a way of thinking, a recursive activity that is not perfected at one sitting, an activity which involves planning, writing revising, writing, revising, editing, and so on.

Research into the writing process has provided me with a conceptual framework for encouraging such students to view writing as a continual process of discovery that depends on revision. The strategies I offer them encourage a continual search for the making and the clarification of

meaning. Sommers(1) has found that inexperienced writers view revision as a linear rather than a recursive activity while experienced writers view revision "...as a recursive process, a process with significant recurring activities with different levels of attention and different agenda for each cycle." Because writing is an especially difficult process for them, inexperienced writers do not view writing as a way of clarifying meaning. Writing is an end in itself. Therefore, they are content to hand in first drafts. Moreover, their linear view of the writing process limits the revision strategies they use and revision, consequently, is a process of editing on the surface level, a process of lexical rather than syntactical changes. The sample below describes how the inexperienced writer revises a paper:

DRAFT: "...because looking down the barrel of his gun gave me a bad scared. I hand him my purse but the joke was on him because my purse was empty."

REVISION: "...because looking down the barrel of his gun gave me a bad scare. I handed him my purse, but the joke was on him."

This student holds to the same syntax; she has modified her spelling and verb tense because these are the errors which have been pointed out to her. In essence, she has edited rather than revised her paper.

In an effort to avoid revision strategies of the type represented above, I have attempted to foster the concept of writing as a multiple draft process. Students are told that they should expect to spend time revising drafts of the same paper. It is my hope that instilling this writing concept will motivate my students to state their ideas with more clarity, to become more aware of their audience, and to differentiate between revising and editing.

One of the techniques I use to foster the multiple draft process is teacher comments. Brannon and Knoblauch(2) have found that, traditionally, teachers write comments after the completion of the writing process; as a result, the student's motive for revising decreases, for revision is then equated with editing rather than composing. Furthermore, teachers' comments are often vague and fail to help students test their intentions about what they are trying to communicate.

Some of the comments I have used to get students to revise at the semantic level have included:

*Can you give some more examples of what you mean?
*What are you trying to prove here?
*Can you compare this experience with any other experience you have had?
*I can see that you really admire this person; can you give more you give more details which tell about her personality?
*Your paper might have been stronger if you had described how the two men looked.

These comments appear in the margins or as part of a personal reaction to the student's work. The following text illustrates how one student revised after responding to the last comment above:

DRAFT: "Suddenly two young men in sneakers and jeans began walking up and down the car looking very suspicious."

REVISION: "Suddenly two young men in sneakers and jeans began walking up and down the car looking very suspicious. One of them was fair skin, good looking with cold eyes that seemed to see straight through you. His hair was cut very low. The other one was dark, short and had an afro."

My experience has shown me that comments similar to these are more effective after students hand in their first drafts. At this time, they should be guided to realize that their meaning is not being developed as fully as it should; their focus is not clear; there are details left out; there are limited descriptions; there is not enough documentation or evidence to draw a conclusion. My major intent at this point is to get students to clarify their meaning: to revise on their own, without my rephrasing or restating what they have written.

Once they rewrite their papers in response to my comments, we can focus on more lexical, or surface, changes. My markings now become those found in traditional writing texts. These include W/W (Wrong Word), S/V (Subject/Verb Agreement), VB/T (Verb Tense), R/O (Run-On), and Frag (Fragment). Students are told that these changes really involve proofreading for editing. They will receive a grade only after they have proofread and edited their papers.

Another technique I use to encourage revision of first drafts is peer editing. Ken Macrorie's "Helping Circle," explained in his Telling Writing, provides a framework for motivating students to edit as a result of positive peer feedback and recommendation. I ask my students to bring in three or four copies of their papers. They then work in groups of three and four taking turns to read their papers. Each listener is first asked to respond to a paper positively. Then each student is asked to either ask a question which will clarify an aspect of the paper or to write a statement or a recommendation which may improve it. The "Helping Circle" thus provides students with real audiences, audiences which give a variety of responses to their written texts.

I have learned that when students are first exposed to the "Helping Circle," they find it very difficult to give positive feedback. This is especially true for students in basic writing classes; possibly because they have experienced so much failure with their own writing, they find it difficult to commend any portion of anyone else's . They evaluate each other's writing in the way their own has traditionally been evaluated, searching for spelling, tense, and word usage errors. It is therefore incumbent upon the teacher of these students to hold many practice sessions on how to give positive feedback recommendations which focus on clarifying meaning. After a few practice sessions, some typical written student comments to essays are as follows:

*Shows interest but lacks structure.

*Ending should be stronger and longer.
*The introduction needs more information.
*There are many spelling and punctuation errors.
*The word "children" is used excessively.
*That was really moving; I related to it.

Although these comments appear to be vague and are a combination of revisions that would require lexical and semantic changes, they can be used to encourage students to make semantic revisions. The following illustrates written text before and after peer feedback:

DRAFT: "Survival means taking care of yourself and your family. In order to take care of your family there are certain needs to be met."

REVISION: "Survival means taking care of yourself and your family. In order to take care of your family there are certain needs to be met. These needs are the basic needs of food and shelter. Without these basic needs, survival would be very difficult."

The pedagogical strategies I have discussed encourage students to revise within a framework whereby they learn to view writing as recursive in nature and to develop and refine their ideas in a manner similar to that of experienced adult writers. They are given a sense of audience, and the writing class becomes a workshop where teachers and students continually work at trying to make meaning of the text.

Current research on revision in the writing process has clarified the distinction between revision and editing for many who are involved in teaching writing; however, the process of how to clarify these invaluable strategies for students still remains a problem. This seems to be especially true for the basic writer. Persons who are required to take basic writing are not usually interested in the art of writing. They are more interested in improving their writing to the extent that this improvement will enable them to pass the course and to write an essay or a research paper for another course. The concept of writing and rewriting may appear to be a waste of time for the basic writing student.

Further research is needed for the basic writing student. For example, once students begin to generate a great number of revisions, how do we cope with the new editing problems which occur? How can we encourage students to revise because of an inner need rather than in response to teacher comments or peer editing? Finally, is there a significant difference in attitudes towards writing among students who are encouraged to revise papers and students who are not?

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(1) For the work of Nancy Sommers, see "Revision in the Composing Process: A Case Study of College Freshmen and Experienced Adult Writers," CCC, 31(December 1980), 378-388, and "Responding to Student Writing," CCC, 33(May 1982), 148-156.

(2) For the work of C. H. Knoblauch and Lil Brannon, see "Teacher Comment on Student Writing: The State of the Art," Freshman English News,

10(Fall, 1981), 1-3, and "On Students' Right to Their Own Texts: A Model of Teacher Response," CCC, 33(May 1982), 157-166.

THE MODELING TEACHER

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Editors' note: Many teachers, especially language arts teachers, are becoming aware that students, of all ages and all abilities, learn better if they take the initiative and assume personal responsibility for their education. Exactly how students can be encouraged to move in this direction remains problematic. One possible way is for the teacher to actually model along with students the kinds of behavior and interaction she wants them to assume. The concept of modeling as an important educative technique, applicable to all independent classroom activities, is implicit in the following two examples offered by the author.

Modeling for the Peer Group Critique Process

The teacher assigns a topic, and students have ten minutes in which to write. This is the "free writing" activity in the relatively new approach to teaching writing used throughout New York State known as WEDGE (Writing Every Day Generates Excellence).(1) The piece of writing done at the end of the ten-minute period may or may not have been on the topic, for the concept of "free writing" is just that--free. The author has the right to ramble on so that feelings and thoughts are put on paper without being exactly on the assigned topic. At this point, content is the priority and not the skill of writing to the topic.

The piece is then presented for peer analysis. The eventual goal is to divide the class into independent groups of four, each member fulfilling one major function at a time. Member "A" reads her or his free writing; "B" summarizes the piece; "C" identifies parts for clarification; and "D" lets the author know which part she or he liked best or would like to hear more about. "A" takes the group's comments under advisement and rewrites the original piece, which becomes the first draft. The WEDGE Manual suggests beginning peer criticism of written work in the fourth grade, but I have used it in the third grade with success.

How does this group process come about? Not easily by any means.

The teacher as director must set the stage with the model example. First of all, the teacher free writes along with the class. From the outset, the teacher is right there with the students. There will come a time when a reluctant writer will not want his or her writing read, so the teacher must be ready to read her piece for critique purposes.

There are many ways to model peer criticism and the group process. The one to use depends on the maturity and skills ability of the particular class. Often, it is necessary to use all the models in sequence spread over a period of time. The formula is a combination of the WEDGE prescription and what I have found works in grades 3 through 6. The options, in sequential order, are:

1. A piece of writing is shown on an overhead projector, and the teacher reviews the content for the class according to the four guiding activities.

2. The teacher reads a free writing piece, either his or her own or a student's, or has one read. Anyone in the class may ask the guiding questions one at a time and students respond as a class.

3. The class divides into four groups, one group for each of the major functions. A volunteer from group A reads a piece of free writing that is then commented on by one member of each of the three other groups. The writer then rewrites his or her paper. This option can be played out until each student has had the opportunity to perform each role.

4. When the class is ready for the ultimate peer group session, even that can be modeled by having one group go through its paces for the benefit of the rest of the class.

I use at least one of these variations as a model every time the group process is to be used.

Modeling for Writing a Narrative

A group of fourth graders meet to read a piece of literature, "Thank You M'am" by Langston Hughes, and then to write their own narratives. Either I read the story aloud to the class, or we read it aloud together, or everyone reads it silently at the same time.

The story then becomes a narrative model, not in the sense that students try to recreate it, but that it is a source to motivate each one's own story. Our goal is not to simulate the writing of Langston Hughes, but to establish some identities as suggestions for the student's own narrative.

I might say first, "Can you identify with the boy who wanted to steal the woman's purse in hopes of getting enough money to buy sneakers? How do you relate to him? Did you ever want something so badly you were ready to steal for it? Will you write about it?"

To expand the options, I might suggest another identity that's a bit more indirect: "Perhaps you recognize the woman in the story. She took the boy in and wound up giving him a good meal and $10.00. We don't know too much about her, but she hints that there were things in her past better not mentioned; things that she was ashamed of. Did you ever do any-

thing you were ashamed of? If not yourself, do you know of someone who would have that sort of story for you to write about?"

The same character can be used to establish quite a different identity. "The woman in the story was very kind to the boy in spite of the fact that he was ready to steal from her. Have you ever been kind to someone when it really wasn't expected? Has someone been kind to you or helped you when you didn't expect it? Would you write one of those stories for us?"

Almost any story can serve as a model to suggest any number of identities on which students can base their own narratives. But there is more. Some students may be reluctant to use the literary story at all. That is why teachers must always have stories of their own. Using the WEDGE guidelines, they tell the story to the class, along with their feelings about it. The students' options may be greatly expanded by the fact that the model story comes from someone they know who is there with them.

This means of creating options can move to a level of even greater intimacy. After all, fourth graders can provide their own models. Working in pairs, they can tell stories to one another. The choice then becomes, "Which story do I write?" They may then write their own story or their partner's story, whichever is more appealing. An influencing factor here might be whether the child is more comfortable writing in the first or third person.

Modeling the narrative in all these ways assures that each student has a story to tell and encourages the realization that all stories start in someone's verbally expressed experiences and feelings. Similar modeling procedures can be used for every type of writing assignment. In fact, these days, I wouldn't place students in any kind of writing situation without first modeling it with them.

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(1) WEDGE was organized and supervised by the Center for Communication Arts of the New York City Board of Education. Members of the CUNY Chancellor's Task Force on Writing were among the consultants during the early stages of this project. The WEDGE manual for the teaching of writing is available through the New York City Board of Education.

A VARIATION ON PEER CRITIQUING: PEER EDITING AS THE INTEGRATION OF LANGUAGE SKILLS

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In the early 1970's peer critiquing began to be used as a collaborative learning technique in freshman composition, peer-tutoring, and even

upper-level advanced writing courses. During the social changes of the 1960's, students had wanted more autonomy over their educations, and books like Peter Elbow's Writing Without Teachers and Kenneth Bruffee's A Short Course in Writing showed they were able to evaluate each other's writing. Under careful guidance, students became their own teachers, often giving teachers a second or third draft for a first reading and evaluation. This student-centered approach to writing classes made demands on both teacher and student: faculty had to become guides, not lecturers; students had to become aware of and articulate about their own writing.

Before open admissions--at CUNY in 1970 and about five years later for much of the rest of the country--many students were considered capable of handling the language skills necessary to make the judgments involved in peer critiquing. These students spoke and wrote standard American English, had few problems with the grammar of their dialect, and so could make the decisions about content, structure, and style which rest at the center of peer critiquing. Because of open admissions, which resulted in the influx of new basic writers and the establishment of numerous basic writing programs, many new challenges faced the writing teacher.

The opening of LaGuardia Community College coincided with open admissions at CUNY. It soon became clear that many of our new basic writers did not have the language skills necessary for peer critiquing, so we began experimenting with variations of the technique. As we adapted it to fit this new student body, we shifted the emphasis from peer critiquing to peer editing, and discovered that basic writers can benefit greatly from a process of peer editing which integrates the language skills of writing, reading, and listening.

Incorporating peer editing into our curriculum is an important, though not the only, change in our program. In our ongoing attempt to provide basic writing students with the language skills necessary for college work, we have explored other ways of adapting collaborative learning techniques to their needs. We have also added a fourth class hour to the last course in our basic writing sequence, which gives us time to engage our students in writing as a process. A typical week of class includes group pre-writing activities, in-class writing, group editing, and revision. The group pre-writing activities help to make each group a community of writers who comfortably and eagerly enter into the peer editing process.

We have found the use of peer editing in basic writing courses to be a very efficient way of helping students to develop their proofreading skills, of helping them to see, understand, and correct errors. And, as they develop these skills through peer editing and other group work, they are engaged in developing all of their language skills. They function both as performer (reader, writer, and speaker) and as audience (silent reader, listener, and responder). As each student reads her own essay, she listens to her own words and thoughts and sees her own constructions. She then listens to the comments of the others, responds to them verbally, and also makes notations and changes on her own manuscript. It is not unusual for the reader/writer to ask other group members questions about points of grammar or punctuation and to listen to and make notes on the explanation, or for members of the group to consult the textbook. As each member of the group listens to the reading of an essay, he is also reading

along silently, making notes, understanding the meaning. Once the reading is completed, he comments verbally on the essay. Thus, as the process of reading and responding continues, each student is engaged in the various processes of speaking, reading, listening, and writing. These communication skills are practiced in a practical context, a context which gives them immediate usefulness, a context which is guided by the instructor who may interject comments and suggestions at the point when they are most relevant.

In our classes at LaGuardia, students write their first essay in class during the first week of school. Based upon the results of this diagnostic, we establish collaborative learning groups of three apiece, which usually stay together for the duration of the term. When creating these groups, we consider differences in ability to write and edit standard American English and to create coherent and organized essays. We also attempt to group students according to their language backgrounds and leadership potential.

Before the first peer editing session, students will have written an in-class essay on carbon-connected theme paper which was specially designed for our writing program and which makes an original and three copies If the instructors have the facilities and the patience, they can have student papers xeroxed. We grade the original as usual, and the students return the following class period with the three unmarked carbon copies.

In the next class period students edit each other's essays following the guidelines which we present and explain to them. During a first reading, which follows the more traditional peer critiquing procedure, we ask students to note and comment on content and structure. A second reading, which concentrates on grammar and mechanics, utilizes all the language skills necessary for peer editing. The entire process is as follows:

1. The first student reads her essay out loud, slowly, without interruption.

2. The listening students follow along on a carbon copy and comment on the content and structure of the essay following a specific list of questions provided by the instructor. Sample questions might include (a) Is the content interesting? (b) Does the essay have paragraph structure with beginning, middle and end? (c) Are there sufficient examples?

3. The writer then reads her essay again slowly, stopping after each sentence to allow for peer editing of that sentence. As she reads, she both sees and hears her writing and develops a sense of the way her writing looks and sounds. The two listeners simultaneously follow the written text and listen to the writer's reading of the text and so perceive any discrepancies between what is written, seen, read, and heard. Recognizing these discrepancies is the heart of peer editing. As students learn to catch the errors of other students, they also learn to catch their own errors.

4. The second and then the third student follows the above procedures.

5. When the students are finished, we ask each of them what he/she has learned about the content, structure, and number of errors in his/her essay. Verbalizing about the essay helps students to review strengths and weaknesses of the paper and understand that the comments of their audience must be respected and remembered.

6. We give back the graded copies of the students' essays and ask them to compare their results with ours.

7. The students take the suggestions of their group and their teacher and revise the essay for the next class.

It is appropriate for students in a writing class to be involved in the process of peer editing since editing is so important a part of good writing. By no longer dominating the students' attention, the teacher creates a supportive environment and provides guidelines which direct the students' attention to writers and writing. Because students become more engaged in the learning process by sharing what they write with their peers, both the writing task and the product seem less abstract. Writing becomes real as each student plans, composes, evaluates, and revises in the context and with the help of her/his group members. Students working in peer groups are forced to pay attention and talk about language and about themselves as writers. By sharing others' writing, they begin to see the range of possibilities between writing that works and writing that does not. They begin to see patterns of word choice, sentence construction, and of errors in their own writing. Language skills, therefore, become more integrated. As they work in their groups, students use their verbal skills and build on what they already know as they hear and see what is needed in their writing. Seeing what is needed, rather than being told, becomes the catalyst for learning. As students learn to become editors, they listen and respond to criticism from others and they offer criticism. They acquire a sense of their own critical voice. They learn to make decisions based on the responses of others and on their own judgment. As their communication skills grow, students gain self-respect, self-confidence, a sense of cooperation, and the ability to take responsibility for their own learning.

WRITING TASKS AND STUDENTS' WRITING PERFORMANCE(1)

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Despite the fact that hundreds of studies have been conducted during the past five years on the variables that influence students' writing processes and products, our profession still does not have clear answers to a question recently posed by James Gray, the director of the Bay Area Writing Project: "When students do write badly, is it because of what they

don't know about writing, or is it because we don't always know how to get their best writing out of them?"(2)

Probably the most difficult problem to overcome in designing valid, reliable research that might produce answers to Gray's question is the impossibility of controlling all of the factors influencing students' writing performance on any given writing task. Any writer's processes and responses result, to a great extent, from various factors attending the writer's encounter with the particular writing task in the particular setting on the particular day. Since all of these situational factors interact with each other, it is not easy to isolate any one factor, study it in an experimental setting, and examine it to determine whether it facilitates writing improvement. There is some evidence, however, that specific writing task variables can elicit better writing from students. The variables that have been most frequently studied are those which make up the "rhetorical context" of a writing task--information about the audience, the purpose, and the mode.

Many scholars believe that a writer's awareness of his or her audience shapes the language, the content, and the style of the written communication.(3) There is also some experimental evidence that a writer's audience awareness affects the tone and the syntactic complexity of his or her writing.(4) However, there is also evidence that writing tasks which specify different types of audiences do not elicit writing that shows more signs of audience awareness and adaptation than do tasks without any audience specified.(5)

Furthermore, specifying the audience or reader for a writing task may sometimes influence students' writing performance in negative ways. Students who are asked to write to "a friend" or to "fellow classmates" may write more fragmentary prose or more informal diction than they usually would write, and their writing might be downgraded as a result. On the other hand, specifying the reader can backfire, because students might spend more time trying to "psyche out" the actual reader--the teacher--rather than writing for the imaginary reader mentioned in the task, the result being fake "academic prose."

Similarly, there can also be a large discrepancy between the specified purpose for a writing task and the actual purpose for it. Many teachers try to structure writing tasks so as to encourage students to communicate their ideas and feelings, using cue words like "describe," "explain," and "discuss." Yet the reality of most school writing tasks is that students are actually being asked to perform for a teacher rather than to communicate to a specially concerned reader. And even when students' writing is evaluated by their peers instead of by their teacher, anxiety about evaluation may interfere with their writing abilities. Thus, we still do not understand the ways in which the specification of an ostensible or an actual (i.e., student-initiated) purpose influences students' writing strategies and products.

Most of the research on the effects of the rhetorical context of writing tasks has focused on the specification of the rhetorical mode of discourse. Several studies have shown that students produce more syntactically complex writing when they write arguments and expositions

than when they write narrations and descriptions.(6) One team of researchers has stated that "presenting an argument seems inherently to require the interrelationship of propositions which is expressed syntactically by the subordination of clauses . . . Perhaps high syntactic complexity in argument is a function of the essential nature of argument."(7)

While there is evidence that variation in the rhetorical mode of writing tasks influences the syntax that students produce, there is very little evidence that this variation influences other features of students' writing. For instance, we don't know if writing tasks which ask students to "argue," to "persuade," or to "agree or disagree" elicit different types of details, different organizational patterns, different vocabulary, different transitional devices, or even different kinds of errors than do tasks which ask students to "tell," to "describe," or to "explain."

Apart from audience, purpose, and mode, very few other writing task variables have been studied in order to determine their effects on students' writing processes or products. In my own research, conducted under the auspices of the CUNY Freshman Skills Assessment Program, I asked students to write to several versions of a single prompt: while the subject remained constant, I varied the demands of the task. I then examined the effects of the questions' cognitive and affective demands on writing performance. Questions with low cognitive demands asked students to "relate" ideas, rather than to "evaluate" them, and to "discuss" their own ideas, rather than to "agree or disagree" with someone else's. Questions with high affective demands asked students to "discuss" their personal experiences with schooling and education. I hypothesized that questions with both low cognitive and high affective demands--that is, questions which offered options for interpreting and for responding to the question and which asked them to incorporate their personal experiences--would activate and sustain their writing competence to a much greater degree than would other types of questions. The dependent variables which I examined in 152 students' written responses to the experimental questions included a holistically-assigned quality score, five indices of syntactic complexity, four indices of sentence control, and one measure of vocabulary.(8) The results of my experiment surprised me: the variations in the cognitive and affective demands of the essay questions produced no significant measurable changes in students' writing performance.

The most important thing that I learned from my research is that the relationship between any writing task and students' writing performance in response to that task is profoundly influenced by the nature of the encompassing situation. The effects of writing task variables differ depending on the nature of the student and of the setting. Finally, the findings of my study and of many other studies on writing task variables raise more questions than they provide answers. In addition to Gray's question, which still remains unanswered, here are some other important questions which need to be explored in future research:

1. How do students read writing tasks? Which aspects of the directions do they understand? Or use? Or ignore?

2. How do students interpret writing tasks? What kinds of details do they think that the task is asking for?

3. How do students react to writing tasks? What factors in a task cause a student to perceive it as "easy" or "difficult"?

4. How are students' responses to writing tasks influenced by situational factors (test vs. non-test context, in-class vs. out-of-class assignment, timed vs. untimed composition, student-initiated vs. teacher-initiated task, and so forth)?

We must continue to devote a great deal of time and ingenuity to the creation of interesting, challenging writing tasks in a variety of modes on a variety of topics for our students. And we must continue to conduct research on our writing tasks in order to determine which ones enhance students' writing performance and facilitate the development of students' writing competence.

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(1) A longer and different version of this paper has appeared in the Fall 1983 issue of The Writing Instructor.

(2) James Gray, Pref., The Write Occasion, by Patrick Woodworth and Catharine Keech (Berkeley: Bay Area Writing Project, 1980), p. iii.

(3) See the following writers for discussions of audience awareness: Linda Flower, "Writer-Based Prose: A Cognitive Basis for Problems in Writing," CE, 41 (1979) 19-37; James Moffett, Teaching the Universe of Discourse (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973); Mina Shaughnessy, Errors and Expectations (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); and W. Ross Winterowd, The Contemporary Writer (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1975).

(4) See the following writers for reports of research on the effects of audience awareness: Marion Crowhurst and Gene Piche, "Audience and Mode of Discourse Effects on Syntactic Complexity in Writing at Two Grade Levels," RTE, 13 (1979), 101-109; and Barry Kroll, "Cognitive Egocentrism and the Problem of Audience Awareness in Written Discourse," RTE, 13 (1978), 369-381.

(5) Catharine Keech, "The Test Occasion: An Experimental Study," in The Write Occasion, pp. 30-36.

(6) See the following writers for reports of research on the effects of variations in mode; John Perron, "Written Syntactic Complexity and the Modes of Discourse," ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 139-009 (1977); Christine San Jose, "Grammatical Structures in Four Modes of Writing at the Fourth Grade Level," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Syracuse University (1973); and Kathleen Whale and Sam Robinson, "Modes of Students' Writing: A Descriptive Study," RTE, 13 (1978), 349-355.

(7) Crowhurst and Piche, p. 107.

(8) Karen Greenberg, "A Study of the Format of the CUNY Writing Skills Assessment Test," The English Record, 33 (1981), 8-10. 33

TEACHING CHILDREN TO WRITE PLAYS

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The Young Playwrights Festival is a project of the Foundation of the Dramatists Guild designed to encourage people eighteen years old or under to write plays. We do this by advertising far and wide through newspaper articles, radio, and television, and by sending posters to schools across the country. Perhaps the most interesting way in which we encourage children to write is the school workshop program.

We go to a school and offer a playwriting workshop for up to 15 children, who spend a whole day, and sometimes even a second or third day, with a professional playwright. The excitement of participating in a marathon like this is important. This is not a substitute for schoolwork, but a complement to it. We find that teachers are very keen on what we do and very surprised with the results.

The workshops usually begin with a discussion that centers on what is important in a play--the ingredients that we should find in any good play. We are trying to define the basic principles of playwriting. If the group of children can agree on them, then subsequently, when they come to write something for themselves, we shall always be able to refer to the agreed principle Notes are made on the blackboard as the discussion ensues.

Very often, especially with younger children, the discussion is fairly elementary--basic things like "Plays should have action," or "Plays should be interesting." There's nothing wrong with that; in fact, we all know the crushing boredom of a play that is not interesting, so it is fair to write that up on the blackboard. It is interesting, though, how a discussion can develop into a very sophisticated one, even with younger children. I know one workshop leader who was discussing narrative, suspense, and irony with fifth and sixth graders. When he asked the children, "What do we mean by a play reaching its climax?" one child said, " A climax is a new sense of action." I think that is a brilliant definition of what a climax in a piece of drama is. A lot of profound thinking can be stimulated by just the discussion.

The second part of the workshop tries to prove some of the points of the discussion through improvisation. Our workshops always include improvisation as a way of demonstrating the living nature of the dramatist's art. It is an indispensable part of the process of teaching playwriting. It is very difficult to define irony in just words; however, you can illustrate irony very easily through improvisation. One improvisation that I often do is of a school classroom with a child entering late. This child has no letter from a parent, so he or she has to make up an excuse for being late. I usually have another child, who has a letter, so as to point

out the contrast in the way the teacher behaves to the children. What often happens is that the kid who plays the teacher stereotypes the role, and perhaps is rather harsh on the child who has no letter. In any case, the point of the scene is that no one knows, for sure, whether the excuse the child has made up is a true or false one. Of course, the other members of the class can also participate by acting as students witnessing the late arrival of their classmate. I usually then ask the group if they want to find out what actually happened. Why was the child with no note really late?

The second scene we then do is to show the child at home. This changes the point of view completely. We have a mother; we have a child who has gotten up late. I usually have a younger brother or sister at the breakfast table. Very often I have an empty chair as well, designating the place where the father would be. I don't actually have the father present, although I do have someone in the room as the father. I whisper into his ear that he's lying in bed; he's just had a heart attack, and he can't come down to the breakfast table because he's just died. Of course, I don't tell the other children this. As the scene progresses, and the child looks as though he might be late for school for one reason or another, there comes a moment when the absent father becomes the focus of the scene. Someone, the mother or the child, discovers that the father is dead. This is my secret weapon, which, of course, is unexpected.

Then we play the scene in the school again as if it is the following day, or even the same day. I ask the children to play the original scene exactly the same way, word for word. Of course, what happens is that our attitude toward the child is completely different. We, the audience, know the father is dead. Maybe nobody else in the improvised classroom knows; perhaps the teacher does, perhaps the teacher does not. But the point is that the child is very unlikely to announce to the rest of the class, "Well, I'm late because my father just dropped dead." So you see, there is irony--the child makes up an excuse. We know what truly happened but the class in the improvised scene does not. Our attitude toward the protagonist is, therefore, going to be different. This is an exercise in irony. And it also teaches the students about tone and point of view--what one could call the "gesture" of a scene.

I then ask the children for examples of irony in their own lives. This is a very important aspect of the workshop: to relate whatever it is you're talking about to something the children have experienced. I ask them, "Have you, or a friend of yours, ever been in a situation where you knew something about someone else and they didn't know it themselves?" Examples from the classics--Othello or Oedipus or A Streetcar Named Desire --are also used, so that I link the child's experience and the classroom improvisation to an artistic tradition. That is crucial too.

The third section of the workshop is actually inviting the children to write the first scene of a play. There are many ways of approaching this, but we do ask them to write something there and then. We usually give them about an hour, and the playwright is available to help. Often writer's block occurs, or children write a page and think it is sufficient because that's what they are used to in creative writing classes. We have to urge

them to continue and develop what they've written. Sometimes we invent a scenario that is agreed upon by the children, then ask the children to opt for which scene in that scenario they want to write. For example, if you have 14 children, you could divide the scenario into seven scenes, and ask the children in groups of two to write each of those seven scenes. At the end of an hour, you'll have a group-written play, which you can put together in a composite and try out in a performed reading.

The interesting thing about that particular approach is this: if you've worked out a reasonably watertight scenario with a good storyline and vivid characters, you will still, nevertheless, find inconsistencies from one scene to another. This is a very good exercise in teaching children that characters are not stereotypes; they do not behave in consistent ways. You might have in scene 1 a woman who's cruel to her children, and in scene 2 the same woman as a kind wife. This important lesson in characterization teaches the children that they cannot describe a character simply with an adjective. As I put it, "Character is not like the label on a pair of jeans. Characters change their behavior depending on the situation they are in."

A final part of the workshop is the reading of the children's work. Reading a collaborative play has an excitement of its own because the children want to know how the rest of their story develops. However, by letting each individual child write what he or she wants, the teacher very quickly finds out where their separate interests lie.

Of course, it's very difficult to understand the basic principles of playwriting in just one day. Sometimes, I think the discussion has gone marvelously, but when I later read what they've written I realize that it is going to take a while for this understanding to sink in fully. So we always reinforce what we teach at the beginning of the workshop. When children write something which doesn't work because the characters are too stereotypical, or the scenes are far too short or jumping from one place to another like a T.V. script, or because they misunderstand what drama is, thinking that it consists only of car crashes and people falling from high buildings, we can actually help them understand where they've gone wrong by referring to the notes we made earlier.

Ultimately, any work of art, whether by a child or an adult, will have a point of view. There will be a voice at the center of the work which is the author's own. This is the final thing that we try to teach in a school workshop. Writing a play is not simply recording an event; writing a play is crafting the work so that you throw light on a subject from a very special angle--the author's angle. By teaching this important aspect of point of view, we are not only teaching about the crafting element in playwriting, but are asking the children to become more responsible for the reality they have chosen to represent.

DEVELOPING LANGUAGE SKILLS THROUGH RESPONSE TO MASS MEDIA

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Is there anything as common in our culture today as the presence of mass media, television, and televised commercial advertising? I am always amazed that the most obscure reference to anything that appears on television at anytime is invariably recognized by someone. Say to anyone, "You deserve a break today," and immediate images of delectable, delicious, delightful hamburgers flood the mind. Who does not know that El Exigente is the spokesman for coffee of Colombia? Or is that Juan Valdes? Who does not remember Speedy, long retired, effervescent Alka-seltzer? Few, if any at all, would fail a quick quiz, a matching column, linking products to commercials. There may be nothing as common as television and its ubiquitous production, the hard-hitting, soft-selling, the smoothly and clearly constructed, figuratively languaged, occasionally--by an extension of the poetic license--exaggerated claim to meet the ultimate desirable consumer need.

Though many argue that schools should have nothing to do with television advertising, though it is perhaps the most common artifact of our culture, there is a way to take the excitement of the medium and put it to work for the purposes of reading, writing, speaking, and listening improvement. The Sunday News saluted the thirtieth birthday of television in an editorial dated September 13, 1981. It marveled at the technological accomplishments of the medium but called current program offerings "dismally inane mindlessness and pointlessness," echoing a strand of wasteland criticism repeated from the inception of popular television. What was not critized--and could not be--was the quality of the writing that television programming produces.

Television is a lavish, apparently well-endowed patron of the writer whose work, more often than not, is creative, well written and effective as communication. Obviously, there are exceptions. For every piece of clear communication, an incident of obfuscation, distortion, or dishonesty can be cited. On balance though, the account sheet favors the quality of the written word in the medium. Proof of the premise can be found certainly in publicly supported programming, in commercially developed informational specials, and in news and documentary broadcasts.

And, surprising to some, good writing is the rule rather than the exception in commercial advertising. Often economical, terse, and direct because of time constraints, the brief production needs to communicate clearly and completely. Elements of color, sound, and movement support the carefully chosen language that will hold the attention of the viewer who has chosen to host a favorite program but not this unsolicited interloper. These commercial and public service announcements are, in fact, most suited to classroom instruction as items for analysis and imitation. It is quite possible to lead young people through the rigor of creative writing by imitating the process, if not the product, of the commercial,

the style of the package without regard to its content. Many other productions achieve the same purpose, but the commercial serves as a particularly apt illustration of the way the media can be used to increase language acquisition and appreciation.

While it is likely that teachers frequently call on images from commercial advertising as a motivation for language study, I am aware of few places where the effort is as direct as the Gompers High School. Two sections of a class in video production receive extensive work in reading, writing, speaking, and listening by analyzing and imitating television production. Typical assignments include criticism of current programming, design and production of original ideas, and related language tasks. I understand that similar efforts are undertaken at August Martin, Edward R. Murrow, and John Dewey High Schools. The emphasis at Gompers, however, is always the exploitation of the medium for student language acquisition. If a young person learns good camera techniques or marketable audio ability, it is accidental to the course. Language usage, correct and effective as communication, is the essence of the instruction.

Students are required to identify the elements of good programming and to criticize what they view. They are urged to respond with production plans of their own. Commercials and public service announcements provide models. Students may not satirize professionally produced announcements, nor may they duplicate what has already been done. These are difficult requirements and yet they are necessary if a student is to experience the actual conditions of creative thinking and creative use of language.

A second practical requirement is that students are urged to avoid scripted, dramatic situations in favor of off-camera narrations written to suppor selected graphics or other props. The purpose of the work is to use language well and to produce announcements as similar to professional production as possible. The medium must not become an obstacle. Video is a perfect means for this end. Errors can be corrected easily; feedback is immediate and production within a typical class session is possible when planning has been thorough. Be advised, however, that the medium can become an enormous impediment if the instructional purpose of language development and usage slide to second base when matters of production take first. The simpler, the better--with adherence to the standards of professional production as a general rule.

Equipment is an obvious concern. Again, simplicity is the norm. Students today have recording equipment in their homes that is far superior to what many schools have on hand. Nevertheless, nearly every New York City school has something in the library, the audio-visual department, or possibly stored safely in the vault gathering dust. It does not require much to record on videotape student' carefully planned commercials or public service announcements. An upcoming school event, because it is real and significant, may suggest a suitable project for student production.

So, too, segmented news reports, documentaries, editorials, and editorial responses offer other program formats for student productions that can facilitate an increase in language skills. They are relatively brief, require few on-camera performers and no more than one or two cameras. No

matter what form is chosen and no matter how sophisticated is the level of the production, the writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills required remain basically the same. It is best to avoid dramatic, scripted commercials; panel interviews; situation comedies; and the "soaps." Their production requires much more class time than they are worth. Unfortunately, they are often students' favorites.

Responses to mass media may be many. At the risk of complicity, misunderstanding and classroom mayhem, they can provide appropriate opportunities for achieving the common goal: increased language appreciation and acquisition. Often models of the worst, they frequently provide stunning samples of creative, imaginative and figurative usage that parallel the best work of established writers. One might cluck at the waste of talent but would be foolish to miss the opportunity to exploit obvious common ground between clients and agency, students and school. The method described here, illustrated by commercial production, is one way to bridge the common ground.

Why Johnny can't read or write bothers many in the profession. There is so much to be done in so little time. No one wants to waste it on another fad or panacea. This proposal is neither. It offers a tested means for improving language skill, less complicated than it may appear and with enormous potential to increase student awareness of language. "They have eyes and see not; they have ears and hear not," the Scriptures tell us. People, young and old alike, see and hear thousands of carefully written commercial announcements, rarely conscious of the writer's effort or sensitive to his language achievement. Consider how imaginative and efficient the following samples are.

Datsun .we are driven!
Reach out and touch someone.

The friendly skies of United
Let your fingers do the walking...
I made it in New York.

It's not nice to fool Mother Nature
Take the train to the plane.

Don't be fuelish.
You have the look, I want to know better

Sony - no baloney.
All the news that's fit to print
Peak-Freans are a very serious cookie

I'm a pepper, you're a pepper.
Won't you be a pepper too?
Product names: Dry Idea, L'eggs, Zenith, Right Guard, Zest

USING THE LETTERS, DIARIES, AND ORAL TESTIMONIES OF ORDINARY PEOPLE TO TEACH WRITING

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In her 1972 essay, "Teaching Language in Open Admissions," Adrienne Rich tells of her experiences at City College: ". . . my daily life as a

teacher confronts me with young men and women who have had language and literature used against them, to keep them in their place, to mystify, to bully, to make them feel powerless."(1) Students must be able to read before they can write. But if they can do no more than decode the symbols on the page, or more precisely, if they do not want to engage in the meaning-making process because the words are so alien to them emotionally and culturally, then they will not be able to use written language effectively. Students have not trusted assigned readings because their experiences are so different from those in such texts as the Norton Anthology of English Literature. Literature anthologies have focused on one-tenth of the world's population, the public lives of Western white males. The invisibility of nine-tenths of humanity is the result.

The major advantage of using the letters, diaries, and oral testimonies of ordinary people is that they demystify reading and writing. Students read documents never intended for publication, documents describing daily life, and can see that writing is significant to people for a number of reasons, not the least of which is to learn about oneself and one's world.

This approach to the teaching of writing has been tried by 36 college faculty who were involved in the Modern Language Association/Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education project which I directed from 1976-79. Essays describing their courses have been published recently by the MLA in a volume entitled Teaching Women's Literature from a Regional Perspective.(2) In addition, several booklets of student work are available, on a limited basis, if arrangements are made for their return to me.

The first advantage of using personal accounts of ordinary people is that they validate writing. Students often ask, "What can writing do for me?" They know they will never write for profit as professional writers do. But they will write, as letter writers do, to ease loneliness, to strengthen ties with others, and to share joys and sorrows. Maimie, in The Maimie Papers, a published series of letters written by an ex-prostitute to a Boston philanthropist, Fanny Quincy Howe, between 1910-1922, discovers the importance of writing in the process of composing her letters:

> I enjoy telling you about my affairs as I would tell them to myself. . . I often wondered how an intelligent person of sound mind could keep a diary to record every small event, and thought. It seemed such a ridiculous thing, almost asinine. I think now that I have hit on the very reason why they do it, and what for. It must be that, while they are the only ones that see them, they are unconsciously addressing another person, a second self, who is interested in the minutest detail concerning the writer's life; and in writing down each thing, it sort of clears the mind each day and leaves it free for a new set of perplexities.(3)

Besides motivating students to see the importance of writing, these non traditional materials by ordinary women and men help instill the initial sensitivity to voice in writing. Because these materials resemble in many ways the daily life that students themselves experience, they can become

involved in the action, so to speak. As the material itself draws readers in, they can begin to hear and analyze the voice and then acquire their own. In a letter included in the collection To All Inquiring Friends: Letters, Diaries and Essays in North Dakota, 1880-1910, Hubbell Pierce writes from Dakota Territory to his wife Viola in Michigan in 1879. The letter is written over the course of three days--Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

> How I wish I could see you this rainy day instead of writing. I am well but lonesome, it has rained here for 3 days. Mr. D. is asleep. I have done every thing I could think of to pass away the time. Frank is to Valley City after his wife. He will not come back until Monday. I am afraid she will be homesick the house is not roofed yet. If you get me any boots get them at Kings and get no. 9 with double sole and tap. These boots I bought are the best I ever had. You need a good pair of thick shoes too and a pair of those heavy rubbers at Coles you had better get the things there for you can get them cheaper and it is quite a way from the village here. You had better get some mosquito netting for it will be needed here. I never saw such large ones in my life but a little smok will scare them away.

The voice changes from his loneliness on a rainy Saturday and Sunday to an abruptness work week begins:

> D has sent word to Mrs. Johnson to come in July so if you want to come with them you can. Go and see them in about two weeks to find out when they will start. I received a letter from Lyd with yours also two bundles of papers. I shall stop now for I have no more time. Good bye.(4)

When we talk about voice in writing, we are implicitly making comparisons to voice in speaking. The use of oral testimony makes clear what we mean by voice, as well as the differences between voice in speaking and voice in writing. Janet Emig, in "Writing as a Mode of Learning," has noted how speaking differs from writings.(5) When one is talking, someone else is present and one can adjust what one has to say by the other person's reaction. Speaking relies more on the immediate environment, so the speaker does not have to supply all the connections that writers must in order to make themselves understood. Speaking is generally more rapid than writing, so speakers do not have the chance to rehearse and deliberate over what they have said; thus there is less chance for generalizing and seeing relationships among ideas, a possibility in writing. Judith Stitzel, in an unpublished paper writes:

> Since reading means, in part, activating the voice on the printed page, i.e. listening, what better way to concretize the concept than through listening to and trying to "read" actual human voices. Hearing a tape, for instance, the student can recognize the origin of written dialogue in heard voices, as when an interviewee, jogged by an auditory memory, moves unselfconsciously from narration to dialogue--as when an eighty-four year old woman remembering her busy

> mother's neglect of her as a five year old suddenly recreates the harried voice of four-score years ago shooing her out to play.(6)

A third advantage of these materials, besides motivating students by validating writing and instilling sensitivity to voice, is that students are able to see the various stages of the writing process. Oral testimony is particularly effective in demonstrating the composing process. One can begin with the raw data, the taped interview. Then one can look at edited interviews plus the editor's introduction to see what decisions he or she made. For example, the textual notes in The Maimie Papers explain how the editor shaped the book, by necessity omitting many letters. Different kinds of editing are evident in such a collection as These are Our Lives, accounts told to members of the Federal Writers' Project of the WPA in the Deep South during the Depression.(7) The writers were instructed to develop original modes of presenting the material. Accuracy, though, was valued. However, James Agee, in Let us Now Praise Famous Men, violates this criterion when he interviews Emma.(8) Her story has been published separately and reveals his distortion, not only of her life but of the interview itself. With written materials, such as the letters in The Story of the Pewter Basin and Other Occasional Writings Collected in Southern Ohio and Northern Kentucky, we see people writing spontaneously because their intent is to communicate. Martha Jane Hayden, one of the letter writers, concludes: "I must bring my scribling to a close as I fear I have already tired you with my unconnected letter. This leaves us in our usual health hoping it may find you all enjoying the same blessing write soon from your affectionate sister." She adds this postscript, "Excuse mistakes and bad spelling as I am writing on my lap."(9) Students can see that this is the first stage in the writing process. The writer is concerned about getting her message across, not about correctness. She trusts her readers, so she does not rewrite the letter. But she is aware that there are mistakes.

At this point, an instructor might discuss the social values of education which these writings can illustrate. Some of these writers, as Elizabeth Hampsten notes, "appear not to respond to traditional school teaching of grammar, rhetoric, polite discourse generally." Why have these aspects of education not "taken"? Under what circumstances will they "take"? Nancy Porter notes that working with these materials motivates students to get it "right," to edit and revise:

> With specific reference to the improvement of student writing, it has been my observation that when a student transcribes the tape of an oral interview with a person the student has laughed, cried, and deeply empathized with, the student wants to get the transcription right because what he/she wants to do well by is a living voice, a life. I will offer one example. I had a young man whose papers for my regular literature courses were highly idiosyncratic in spelling, syntax, and (in particular) punctuation. I never succeeded in getting him to concentrate on mechanics long enough to see what others did when reading his papers. Yet the same student spent literally hours figuring out the most effective punctuation for his transcription of an inteview he conducted

with a World War II shipyard worker. If half the battle is won by having students see and care about what is on a page (whether in someone else's writing or in their own), then it seems to me that engaging students with the collection and transcription of oral testimony, helps break down print alienation, in fact helps improve student writing.

Finally, these materials stimulate students' imagination and response. There is a thrill of discovery, of recovering the voices of everyday people from the past, and there is also the strong sense of identification, whether the person is a family member or an unknown. The dailiness of their lives strikes a sympathetic chord with students. This stimulation enables students to write in a variety of modes, from the personal to the analytic.

What follows are several assignments which illustrate the range of writing possibilities:

1. Respond as the recipient of a letter, writing in reply--questioning, suggesting, consoling, assisting, or arguing with the author.

2. Present the "true" version of the writer's life, citing evidence from interviews with living relatives, historical research, or simply a close reading of the text of the writer's extant works.

3. Rewrite a letter from the viewpoint of another person mentioned in the letter.

4. Using a record-keeping diary, write the story up in (a) the briefest form and in (b) a longer form, with additions based on what one knows from experience and from reading.

5. Write a paper based on historical allusions in the diary, such as the relationship between white plantation owners and black workers in the South in the late nineteenth-century.

6. Keep your own diary for two weeks in which only incidents are noted. Then analyze the entries to see what narratives develop, what characters enter, and how the events reveal character.

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(1) Adrienne Rich, On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978 (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1979), p. 63.

(2) Leonore Hoffmann and Deborah Rosenfelt, eds., Teaching Women's Literature from a Regional Perspective (New York: Modern Language Association, 1982).

(3) Ruth Rosen and Sue Davidson, eds., The Maimie Papers (Old Westbury, New York: The Feminist Press, 1977), p.9.

(4) Elizabeth Hampsten, ed., To All Inquiring Friends: Letters, Diaries and Essays in North Dakota, 1880-1910 (Grand Forks, North Dakota: University of North Dakota, 1980), p. 95

(5) Janet Emig, "Writing as a Mode of Learning," CCC, May 1977, pp. 122-128.

(6) Judith Stitzel, "Hearing Voices: Oral History as an Aid to Reading," unpublished paper submitted to Modern Language Association for consideration in Women's Personal Accounts: Essays in Criticism and Pedagogy , 1982.

(7) These are Our Lives: As told by the people and written by members of the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration in North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939; rpt. Norton Library, 1975).

(8) James Agee, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (New York: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1980).

(9) Susan Kissell and Margery Rouse, eds., The Story of the Pewter Basin and Other Occasional Writings Collected in Southern Ohio and Northern Kentucky, (English Department, Northern Kentucky University, 1981), p. 71.

(10) Letter received from Elizabeth Hampsten, June 1982.

(11) Letter received from Nancy Porter, June 1982.

THE WRITER AS CONSCIOUS READER(1)

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When unskilled writers in two-year colleges are helped to become conscious of precisely how readers make predictions as they read, the writers quickly become more expert in writing developed ideas with clear elaboration of details. This improvement takes place because the writers come to realize that their readers become confused if a text goes off in unexpected directions, if a text is overcondensed, or if a text is merely repetitious. Activities that lead writers to become "conscious readers" are based on current knowledge of the reading process and of the composing process.

The theoretical framework for this approach derives from a psycholinguistic model of the reading process: namely, that readers interact with print by making predictions based on prior knowledge about language and about the content. The theoretical framework derives also from a decision-making model of the composing process: namely, that a writer

must decide what to say next according to the writer's understanding of what the reader will expect or can be led to expect.

Prediction is a central activity in the reading process. At the word level, the classic example of prediction is: "Once upon a _____." Few native speakers of English would fail to fill the blank with the word "time." The word is easily predicted. Indeed if someone were to write, "Once upon a throne, a queen sat," the chances are high that many readers would read "time" for "throne," especially if the sentence were imbedded in a larger context. Years ago, the Broadway musical Once Upon a Mattress attracted attention with the unexpected "mattress" in its title. And those theatregoers who on the basis of the title made bawdy predictions about the story met the unexpected once again: it was based on the fairy tale "The Princess and the Pea." Perhaps the best illustration of ongoing prediction at the word level is what proficient readers do when they get to the end of the page--they predict what will be the first word on the next page. When their guess does not match what they find, with allowances for semantic substitutes, they generally look back to see what went wrong. As Smith explains:

> Prediction is the reason that the brain is not normally overwhelmend by the possible number of alternative: in language; there are actually only very few alternatives in our minds at any one time that we are comprehending what is being said.(2)

Prediction operates also at tne level of sentences, paragraphs, chapters or essays, and books. One sentence leads the reader to predict, in general terms at least, what the next sentence will say. If the next sentence brings a sudden shift of content, the reader is jarred.

Lest this necessary oversimplification mislead, I hasten to add this disclaimer: reading is a highly complex cognitive process during which layers upon layers of predictions operate concurrently.

Goodman explains some of the complexities of the reading process with his description of sampling, or getting an overall notion of what will be in a text; predicting, or establishing expectations; testing, or checking to see if the expectations are fulfilled; and confirming or disconfirming those expectations.(3) Smith links prediction to comprehension, that all-important concern of readers and teachers of reading, and thus establishes the primacy of setting expectations during the reading process:

> Now at last I can say what I mean by "comprehension." Prediction means asking questions--and comprehension means getting those questions answered. . .Comprehension is not a quantity, it is a state--a state of having no unanswered questions.(4)

This concept has important implications for writers. As writers, students must read their own prose. The writer must serve as his or her own first reader, his or her own initial audience. Weak writers, many of whom are also weak readers, can become better writers when they are made conscious of the ways that prediction works in the reading process. Consider Weaver's description of a poor reader: "The poor reader is often one who

does not predict, does not anticipate what is coming next, but instead treats each word as if it existed in isolation."(5)

If weak readers do not predict, and if weak writers are usually also weak readers, then it follows that weak writers might benefit from instruction in conscious predicting.

Once a writer becomes conscious of the fact that readers actively engage with a text, the writer realizes that his or her writing produces expectations in readers. As self-reader, and as self-editor, the writer becomes a conscious reader--making predictions and searching for their confirmation.

Let us now turn to a concrete illustration of teaching prediction to help writers become conscious readers. Using participatory learning techniques, the instruction starts with word games, structured small-group peer-led reacting to writing, and large-group "prediction sessions."

I use word games to begin a discussion about the word "prediction," which the students usually associate with horoscopes, fortune tellers, and the weather. Next, I introduce oral association games such as "If I mention _____, it makes you think about _____."

TEACHER	STUDENTS
crime	car theft, muggings
muggings	on the street
street crime	darkness, muggings, watch your wallet

This procedure is intended to raise consciousness about what predicting is and how we all do it automatically. My goal is to externalize a simplified model of prediction in the reading process. The next step is to apply prediction to writing, usually through cloze procedures during which the reader guesses the missing letters or words. These kinds of exercises are preparatory to actual writing, which begins when students are asked to write a paragraph. In this illustration, the subject is crime in New York City.

Here is what one weak writer, Roy, wrote (I have numbered the sentences to facilitate the discussion that follows):

Draft 1

(1) New York City is one of the most densely populated cities in the world. (2) It cannot be compared to other cities when it comes to crime. (3) Killings and beatings of our elderly citizens are the most hideous crimes committed by teenagers in "the big apple." (4) Crime is on the rampage morning, noon, and night in New York City.

After circling rather widely, Roy got to the general topic of crime in New York City. But the draft suffers from the writer's not being con-

scious of what a reader expects. (Other explanations of problems in Draft 1 are best saved for another occasion.) As will be seen, many of these other problems disappear as the writer begins to concentrate on prediction in action.

How can a teacher make students conscious of what a reader expects? Not by talking about it, but by demonstrating it. Here the best resource is, of course, the other students in the class who serve as readers. We read together, line by line, as a class. Sentences are revealed one at a time. Thus, sentence one of Draft 1 is put on the board or shown on an overhead projector. The class of readers is asked what they expect will come next. What an eye-opener for the writer! Readers focus on the words "densely populated" and say that they expect to read about overcrowding and its effects on New York City. Some readers ask why the writer is not talking about crime, the subject of the assignment, but they accept what has been written and set their expectations accordingly.

Next, the second sentence is shown. The readers are amazed. Some of their comments:

> "Now that you've gotten to the topic, crime, I am not ready. I was on the population track."
>
> "Hey, you hardly said anything about New York City and now you're making comparisons. Go slow."
>
> "Where's the overpopulation you promised?"

Roy is listening very closely now. He realizes that he has taken too long to get to the subject, but now that he has mentioned crime he is eager to show off his third sentence. Compliments are heard all around. While I recognize that some composition teachers might like to point out some structural problems in the third sentence, I am not tempted. My goal is to raise consciousness about the fact that language begets expectations about further language.

Because I want also to work at the word level, I ask the readers what they would likely have filled in if there had been a blank where the words "the big apple" appear. Most say that they would not fill in "the big apple" because it is a bit too merry for the rest of the paragraph; others like the try at using a synonym for New York City, even if it is not quite right. Later in the semester, I do more work at the word level, especially in emphasizing diction.

When the readers are shown the fourth sentence of Draft 1, I tell them that it is the final sentence of the paragraph. Cries of disbelief ring out. Roy hears that the readers had expected more details, more about those muggings of the elderly. Now Roy is eager to try a rewrite.

An aside about the tactful use of student work is needed here. Never, ever, do I expose a student's writing to the class unless the student volunteers his or her work. In fact, at the start of the semester, I use anonymous drafts from a previous semester (and these, too, are only from students who have given me permission to use their work). I have always

been fascinated to find that soon after the "prediction sessions" become part of the class routine students clamor for their work to be shown. They are eager for exposure to objective eyes, eager for their eyes to be opened, and eager to test their growing abilities as self-readers. The The atmosphere during the prediction sessions is always one of mutual inquiry. Readers discover that they can be honest without being hostile.

Too, students other than the writer will often ask to do a rewrite of a draft just discussed. I always give permission. I find that students thirst to apply what they are coming to understand, and if they wish to base some of their work on someone else's beginning, I encourage the experiment. Most of the time, the original writer will then actively confer with anyone else who has tried a subsequent draft, with the result that intense private debates are not unusual before or after classes, outside of the formal setting for learning. This never fails to quicken my pulse. This collaborative learning has not been mandated by classroom management strucures; rather, it has grown naturally out of students' desire to share and argue ideas. The collaborative process continues through several more drafts; always the discussion focuses on the expectations the language elicits.

Draft 3

(1) Crime is a reality that haunts New York City night and day. (2) Do you want to take a subway from Manhattan to the Bronx? (3) You'd better hold tight to your purse or make sure that your wallet is not in your back pocket. (4) Muggers and pickpockets will be happy to relieve you of your money--or even your life. (5) A favorite target of thieves is our elderly citizens as they ride the subways or walk our streets. (6) Old people are easy marks for cruel teenagers who like to beat and kill old people. (7) One reason for so much theft in New York City is drug abuse. (8) Junkies want their fix, but first they want our money. (9) The "big apple" has a worm in it.

This shift to more natural language often happens after the class has discussed a few of the writer's drafts. Such a shift to natual language happens, I believe, because during prediction sessions the students speak openly in a relaxed manner. The stilted language of "school writing" stands in sharp contrast to the more natural language used while a piece of writing is being discussed. The writer, therefore, is able to rediscover his or her own language roots and thereby find a voice that rings true.

In talking about Draft 3, the readers clearly show that they enjoy the new tone in the piece. They also like the flow from one sentence to the next, though many readers challenge the suitability of sentence 6. Roy particularly enjoys the good things he hears about his whimsical treatment of "the big apple," a holdover from Draft 1 that was dropped in Draft 2. He wanted to use those words, and now he had found a way that made them fit neatly into the mood of the paragraph.

Prediction sessions such as those just described can also concentrate on helping a writer at the word level. For this purpose, the writer's paragraph can be subjected to a modified cloze procedure to control for whatever needs attention. Such a technique is effective when a writer has many problems with, for example, diction or verb forms. Prediction sessions can also be used to help readers become conscious of needed connections between paragraphs.

Prediction as it operates in the reading process is, of course, a more complex cognitive activity than these teaching strategies might seem to suggest. But the simplification that comes with externalization helps writers become conscious readers, become effective self-readers--and thus better writers. In fact, after "prediction sessions" of the sort just described, the externalized processes quickly become internalized. Then the interaction between writer and self-reader happens naturally.

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(1) A full-length version of this paper appears in Building Bridges Between Reading and Writing, Sternglass and Butturff, eds. University of Arkansas: Language & Style Books, 1983 (forthcoming). It was also presented as an invited paper at the World Congress on Reading, Dublin, Ireland, summer 1982.

(2) Frank Smith, Understanding Reading: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Reading and Learning to Read, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978), p. 77.

(3) Kenneth S. Goodman, "Psycholinguistic Universals in the Reading Process," in Psycholinguistics and Reading, ed. Frank Smith (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), pp. 21-27.

(4) Smith, Understanding Reading, pp. 66-67.

(5) Constance Weaver, Grammar for Teachers: Perspectives and Definitions (Urbana: NCTE, 1979), p. 54.